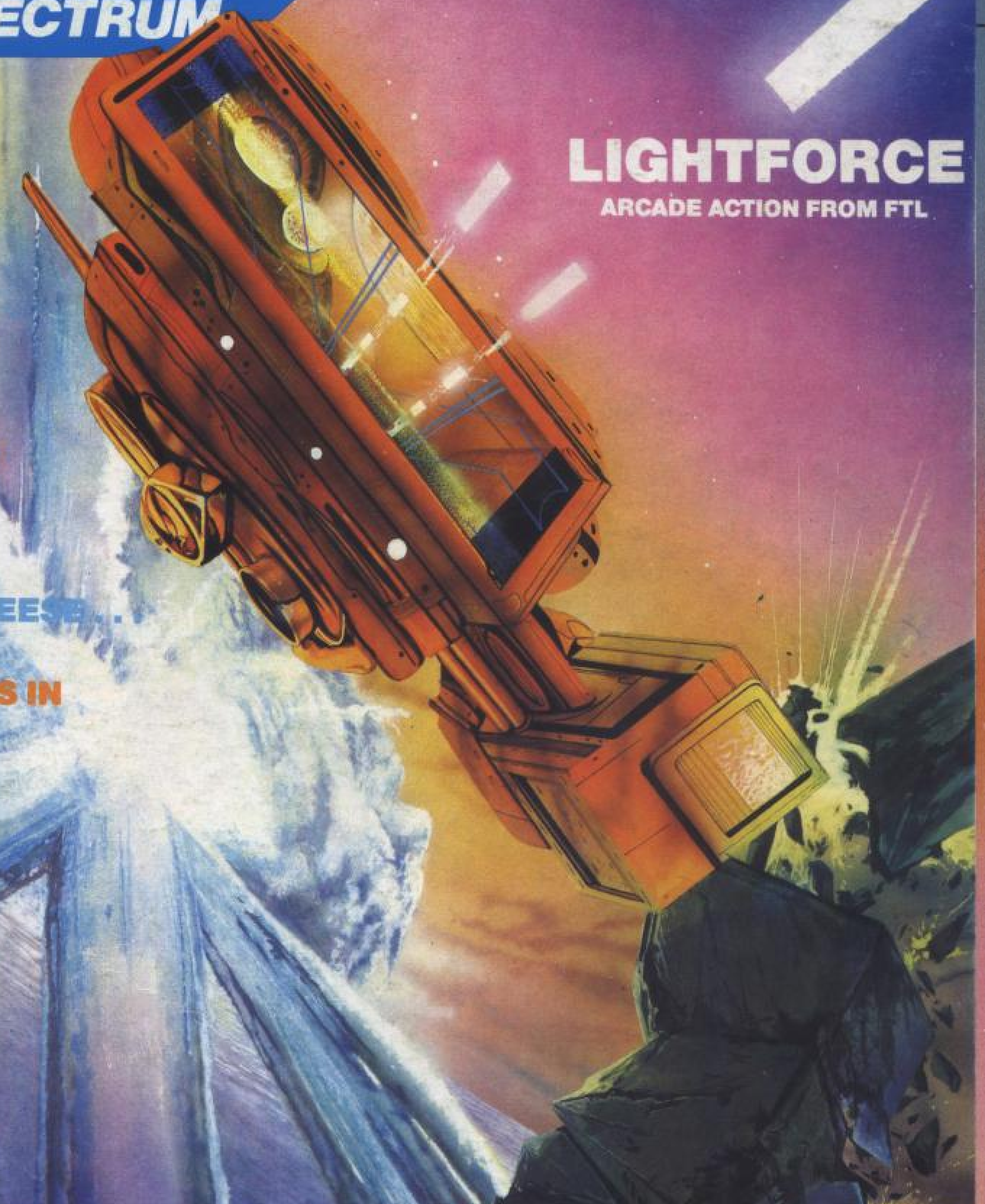
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CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM

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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE NO. 34 November 1986

PUBLISHERS
Roger Kean, Oliver Frey, Franco Frey
Publishing Executive / Editor
Graeme Kidd
Staff Writers
Lee Paddon, Lloyd Mangram, Hannah Smith
Adventure Editor
Derek Brewster
Strategy Editor
Sean Masterson
Tech Tipster
Simon Goodwin
Contributing Writers
John Bates, Brendon Kavanagh, Rosetta McLeod, John Minson
Production Controller
David Western
Art Director
Dick Shiner
Illustrators
Ian Craig, Oliver Frey
Production
Gordon Druce, Tony Lorton, Cameron Pound, Jonathan Rignall, Matthew Uffindell

Advertisement Manager
Roger Bennett
Advertisement Assistant
Nick Wild
Subscriptions
Denise Roberts
Mail Order
Carol Kinsey

Editorial and production
1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1AQ
☎0584 5851
Mail Order and Subscriptions
PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB
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DIY

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CRASH SMASHES

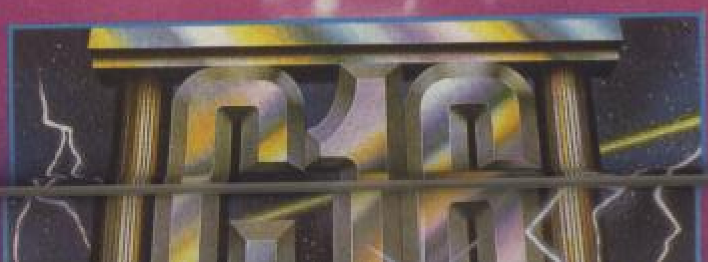
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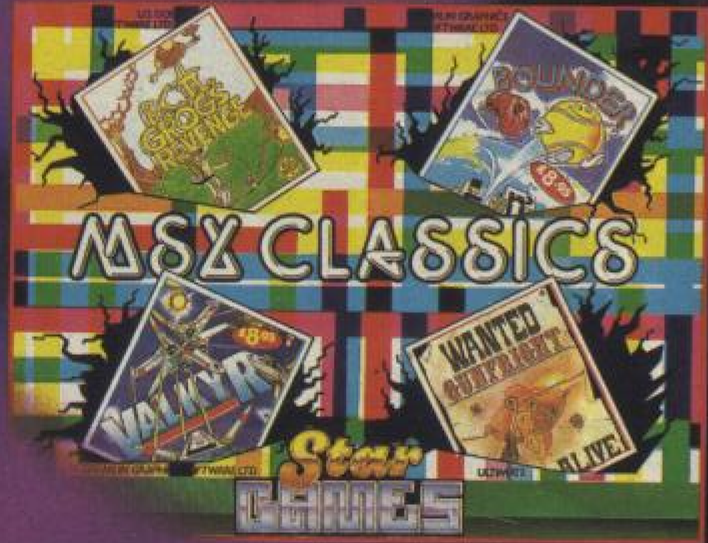


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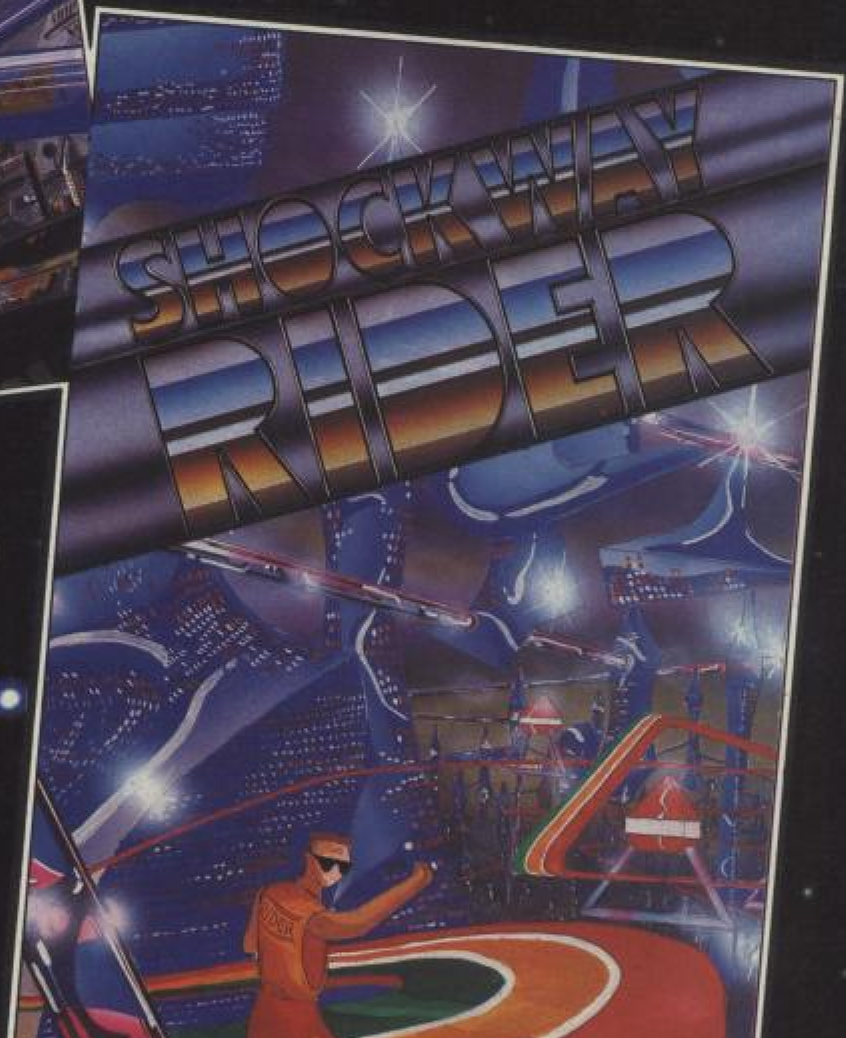
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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

There must be an awful lot of home computers tucked away in dark corners, gathering dust. Not everyone who owns a Spectrum uses it every day, every week or even every month — once the first flush of enthusiasm waned, many people abandoned the 'serious' side of home computing. Some of these people stopped using their computers altogether, while others joined the growing ranks of dedicated games players.

With all Sir Clive's problems and the Amstrad buy-out, there's something of a renaissance on the Spectrum front at the moment — not one inspired by Alan Sugar, however. Amstrad seem to have inherited the Sinclair ability to foul up along with the Sinclair name: for instance, the Plus 2 could have done with a little more thought behind its design so that the Interface 1 (and other add-ons) would fit on the back comfortably. An important consideration, that.

Exciting things are currently happening on the Spectrum hardware front because of the flair shown by independent designers and manufacturers. After the marked failure of the *Mikro-Plus* add-on and the collapse of CURRAH, peripheral manufacturers have bounced back. In the last couple of months we've seen some very interesting hardware developments. The *SpecDrum* took rhythm to the masses at an affordable price, and CHEETAH have just launched a slick sound sampler. Not to be outdone, RAM ELECTRONICS have weighed in with a cornucopia of musical goodies encased in The Music Machine. There's a dedicated, RAM-based word processor on its way from RAM ELECTRONICS, and CHEETAH have more plans for musical hardware. Other firms are getting involved too.

This is fast becoming the age of MIDI — an interfacing standard that gets musical instruments and computers chattering away happily to each other. Soon, even the most musically illiterate will be able to have fun producing professional-sounding music on inexpensive systems based around the Spectrum.

Other areas of entertainment centred on the Spectrum are about to open up. Mel Croucher's cunning device that allows computer generated graphics to appear on top of a TV picture should be available to Spectrum owners before long.

New areas of computer entertainment are developing. Of course, the healthy games market continues to produce new and innovative product, as well. Look at *Lightforce* and *Fat Worm Blows a Sparky* . . .

With the arrival of new add-ons, some of those dusty Spectrums tucked away in dark corners might well be fetched down, plugged in and used once more. And while the machine's on, people may decide to see what's happened to computer games since the days of *Maziacs*. And be amazed at what they see. Who knows? There could be another computer boom just around the corner. Let's see what happens this Christmas. . . .



Graeme Kidd



OVER FROM AMTIX!

Someone's just told Lee Paddon that part of the CRASH initiation ceremony involves him buying a round of Old Flatulence Bitter for everyone on the team! Poor fellow's more used to the balmy climes of the AMTIX! office, where he's been beavering away for the past few months.

Following in the footsteps of Robin Candy, Tony Flanagan has departed for pastures new, and Unca Lee has moved from the zone of the Amsters to join CRASH. Lee's been wasting his youth for a good few years now, pounding joysticks and keyboards (amongst other things) at YOUR COMPUTER in London before heading towards the sleepy market town of Ludlow. And the Paddon family are just about to buy a house next door to Ben Stone — becoming a real family affair, this magazine . . .

ADVERTISERS' INDEX

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THE MONTHLY SOFTWARE STAR FOR YOUR US GOLD

US GOLD CRASH

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KERRASH!



The LM Editorial team as you'll probably never ever see them again — all in suits. Gaz Top, the one with the hat, isn't part of the LM Editorial team, so he's not wearing a suit!



Ah yes! Gaz is hurling more goodies into the audience . . .



Things are happening on stage at the Camden Palace — the audience crowds in, covered in LM T Shirts and Hats. . . .



Jane Stanton reads the script for a camera commercial — part of the competition which ended up with Jane winning a Konica camera kit!

FROM THE TOWERS TO THE PALACE

A great deal of travelling was done on Thursday 18th September — lots of NEWSFIELD staff members put on their suits, clambered into a fleet of vehicles and zoomed off to London, setting out before dawn. And several hundred CRASH, ZZAP! and AMTIX! readers headed towards a rendezvous in London on the same day.

Why? Well, NEWSFIELD was hosting a party in the famous Camden Palace disco to launch a new magazine to advertisers. Readers of NEWSFIELD's computer magazines were invited to join in the fun at the LM Launch Party.

A tiny bit of 'Us and Them' was involved: while **Gaz Top** (of Get Fresh fame) hosted the disco and gave away lots of freebies on the ground floor of the Palace, the people who control huge advertising budgets and industry figures such as **Ian Stewart** from GREMLIN GRAPHICS, **Tim Chaney** from US GOLD, **Paula Byrne** from RAINBIRD and **Ted Heathcote** from GARGOYLE GAMES looked on from the balconies.

Everyone who managed to get the day off to attend was rewarded with a Limited Edition LM launch party T Shirt, and quite a few people went away with a lot more. During the party, Gaz Top gave away several hundred pounds worth of camera equipment, computer games and dozens and dozens of cheeky red LM hats . . .

NEW FOR OLD

Whilst strategy freaks twiddle their thumbs waiting for the next **Kevin Toms biggie** *President*, they can take a nostalgic trip down memory lane with a repackaged version of the slightly aged classic *Football Manager*. This new version comes in a double cassette package, has had the names of the players updated, but otherwise is the same game you knew and loved back in 1982. Oh yes, there's a competition to win a trip to the 1987 Cup Final inside. A company spokesman seemed a bit vague about the price 'shop around and you might get it for less than a fiver' is about as definite as he'd get.

Another hoary old chestnut getting a quick lick of paint is *Gyron*. This didn't sell awfully well when it was released as a full price game over a year ago, but now it has been rereleased on FIREBIRD'S Silver range at £1.99. The game features the previously unreleased Arena maze, — played as the tiebreaker in a competition run with the game when it was initially released. The winner of this competition managed it in 18 minutes, can you solve the maze faster? If you are a *Gyron* fan, you'll want to have a look at this new maze. Alternatively, if the game has never appealed to you before, at this price, it might well be worth a look

FROST BYTE IN SPRING?

MIKRO-GEN has a suitably seasonal theme to the first of its winter releases. *Frost Byte* is set in the frosty planet Cosmia.

The battle for freedom, enlightenment, and all those nice things is being lost by the Kreezers who have been captured by the goulish monsters who inhabit the planet's craters. The player controls a Kreezer — that looks and behaves rather like a *Slinky* spring.

The hero has managed to escape the evil clutches of his captors and must now escape from the crater, freeing five fellow Kreezers on the way, and then leading the *Front Liberation aux Kreezer* (FLAK) to victory.

It's an arcade adventure with shoot—em—up overtones and looks rather pretty — it's in line for a full review next month.

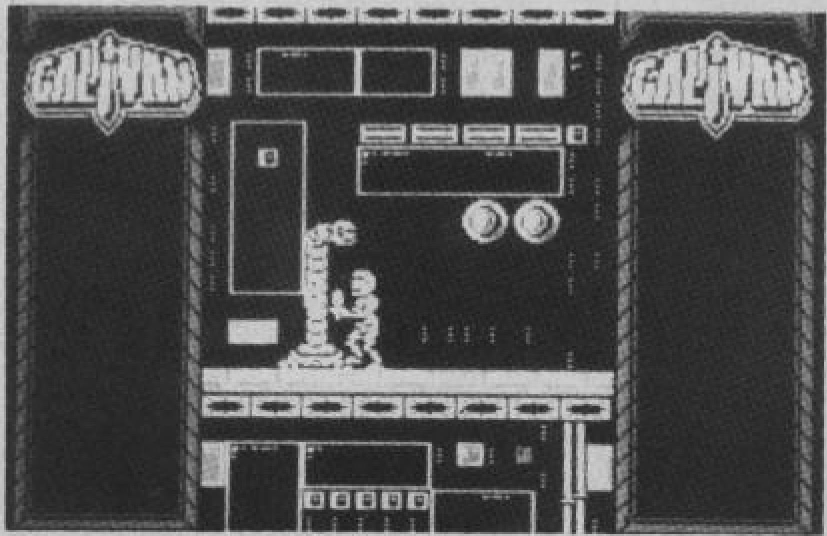
OOPS! SORRY HEWSONS!

Last month we managed to make a blunder of epic proportions: for some reason an advertisement for HEWSON's Commodore game, *AlleyKat* sneaked its way into CRASH. This has confused quite a few people (not least HEWSON themselves, who have no plans for a Spectrum version at the moment.)

Everso sorry, folks. Promise it won't happen again.

GALLIVANTING ALONG

Also arriving just too late for the reviewing team to get stuck into was *Galvan* from **IMAGINE** — another coin-op conversion. A quick look at the game reveals it to be a huge arcade shoot 'em up where the lead character, Galvan, is faced by a whole host of meanies. Some nifty footwork is needed to move around the screen, as well as combat skills. Galvan starts off with just his bare hands, but gradually acquires more powerful weapons. At the end of each level, a huge Demon appears which has to be blasted apart piece by piece.





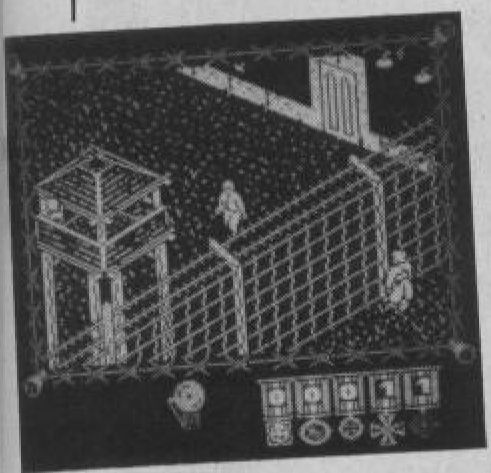
COMPILATION CORNER

Already the first rush to compile older hits in time for Christmas is happening. Both **DURELL** and **VIRGIN** have just released compilations, which must put them ahead of the crowd of software houses that will soon be going for the Chrissie Stocking market.

VIRGIN has *Now Games 3* — no prizes for guessing that this is a sequel to the company's two previous efforts. The line up for this one is *Nick Faldo Plays the Open* from the **ARGUS MIND GAMES** label, *Codename Mat II* and *View to a Kill* from **DOMARK**, *Everyone's a Wally* from **MIKRO—GEN**. **VIRGIN** are also releasing a new version of their own hit game *Sorcery* on the tape, featuring improved graphics and extra rooms.

DURELL has a very strong line-up for its compilation modestly entitled *Big 4*. The four titles are all **DURELL** games of varying vintages that were all rated very highly by CRASH in their time. The big four in question are *Combat Lynx*, *Critical Mass*, *Turbo Esprit* and *Saboteur*.

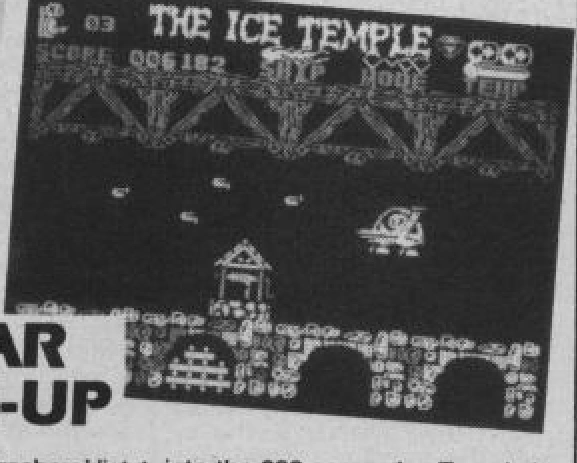
ESCAPE! From Ocean



Just as the magazine was going to bed, a cassette tied round a half brick came crashing through the windows of CRASH Towers. When we feverishly untied the package, it was found to be *The Great Escape* making its escape from **OCEAN**

From those whiz programming Liverpudlians, **DENTON DESIGNS**, it's all about getting out of a POW camp. You control a prisoner walking around a large 3D scrolling landscape. Whilst working out your escape route, you've got to keep the old chin up by collecting red cross parcels, and keep your nose clean by attending roll call.

Having worked out the system of guards the aim is to collect and hide escape equipment. Getting caught means a quick frog march to solitary confinement for a spell of morale-sapping thumb twiddling, so be careful. . . .



NUCLEAR FREEZE-UP

Also on the late gate-crashers' list is *Ice Temple* from **BUBBLE BUS**. From the hitherto little known Tom Prosser, it is an arcade adventure all about zipping about, picking up some things and zapping others in a huge cave systems.

The hero, Nick Razor, stumbles into the 800 screen Ice Temple in search of his stolen motor and realises that he has entered a huge alien thermionic reactor that threatens to turn everything into an icy waste. Find that car, Nicky babe and disable the reactor before we all freeze our socks off!

SPECTRUM PLUS TWO HICCOUGHS?

Despite indications given at the PCW Show that the new Spectrum would be available from the end of September, there's still no sign of the Spectrum Plus 2 — in the Ludlow shops, anyway!

According to other High Street retailers we contacted (on October 8th), Plus Twos are not available for them to order from their head offices, and there is no retail price available yet. This could mean that the machines are still at least three weeks away from chainstore branches.

During this waiting period, the older Spectrum Plus and 128K models have been discounted by several retailers. Comet are quoting £69.99 for the Plus and £99.99 for the 128, whilst Dixons/Currys is offering deals on the two models which include cassette recorders and joysticks for £109.99 and £129.99 respectively.

As we went to press, a spokesperson at Amstrad said that shipments of the Plus Two had started. Amstrad Distribution claimed to have shipped 'some machines' to independent retailers, and claimed that Dixons have taken a shipment, so the Plus Two should be available by the time you read this.

Early Plus Twos apparently had problems when it came to working with a domestic colour TV — but Amstrad claim there have been no technical problems with the machine, and that the only difficulties they had at the PCW show were caused by the TVs being used.

Amstrad wouldn't comment on the question of incompatibilities with existing peripherals — it appears that it is impossible to plug Interface 1 directly into the machine because the distance between the PCB and the bottom of the case is greater than on previous models. Also, most add-ons are likely to interfere with the RS232 port. The height between the top of the case and the PCB has also been increased . . .

Fear & Loathing



BACK WITH A VENGEANCE!

What has that incompetent sonuvabitch Laszlo been ranting on about??? I vanish in search of the hottest story of my life and he's writing my obituary. A shock to the system of my many readers, I'm sure, so let me tell you what happened . . .

I was wandering round the departure lounge of LA International Airport, waiting for them to announce the flight for Mexico. Normally I wouldn't have bothered with the bookstore, but one of the airport security guards had started to eye me in a suspicious fashion and it seemed like a good idea to blend into the scenery . . . which isn't easy when you're wearing a green and lilac Hawaiian shirt and orange and blue shorts!

Well, what should I find nestling on the racks but the early, international edition of CRASH, which contained the libellous remarks you read in the last issue. Deciding to forego the luxury of the finest chilli known to mankind, I slipped into the queue for the London bound plane. I'd tried to avoid it, but it looked like I was needed at the PCW Show!

The plane touched down at four in the morning, having been struck by lightning several times as it crossed the pond. Even for a seasoned traveller it was a hairy ride, and one or two people got hysterical, but I just charged another Bloody Mary or three to the CRASH account and weathered it. After all, if you're going to go down you might as well do it with a drink in your hand!

I spent the rest of the morning in a daze. I seem to remember a misunderstanding involving a taxi driver whose parentage I brought into question. Anyhow, the point is that I didn't roll up at the HEWSON lunch till the early afternoon, too late for Andrew's little speech.

Actually, for once I'm glad I missed this latter-day Churchill. I have my doubts about the HEWSON sanity! I mean, they'd bedecked their suite in full Christmas style, tree included. It caused a certain feeling of paranoia as I began to wonder just how long I'd been in that taxi!!!

The point of it all is that anybody who orders a game directly from the big **H** gets a free Crimbly gift. Quite what gift, they weren't saying. I'd settle for nothing less than a signed photo of the gorgeous **Julia Coombs**.

As I wandered out of the Hewson suite, in search of further fun of a more seasonal nature, I was set upon. Now of course I expect to be set upon at PCW, but not quite so early into the affair. And who was my assailant? Why, none other than Mr Flat Top himself, **Andy Wright**. Apparently he took exception to something I wrote and wanted to stifle the freedom of the press. This he planned to do by unscrewing my nipples!

I dived for cover in the ARGUS binge, narrowly avoiding the grasp of the bearded bouncer who bore a strange resemblance to the Archbishop of Canterbury's Special Envoy, Terry Waite. That could only mean it was **Dave Carlos**. Unluckily, the stocky one failed to prevent my pursuer diving into the melee after me.

What followed isn't a pleasant story. Into a room full of earnest young software types, all doing business and showing their latest games to serious journalists, burst Minson, shouting obscenities at the blond bombshell. **Peter Holme** of ASP was even moved to call Andy a 'software yob'. Steady there, Peter. This was mild by comparison with what was to follow!

Mindful that discretion is the better part of Valerie, I took refuge behind the skirt of a woman. Only there was something funny about this particular skirt, it was tight. Taut, even. And it was black. Pneumatic. RUBBER!!!

"Hi, Jane," I smiled, trying to act as cool as any man who has just had his nipples twisted can be. The smile that shone back was the best thing I'd seen since touchdown.

"Hello, darling, would you like to furniture polish my bottom?" asked la dolce Smith. "It has to be done every half hour or I end up with fingermarks all over my behind." Maybe it was going to be a good PCW after all. . . .

Finally reaching Olympia itself I met up with my long standing colleague, **Leslie B Bunder**. Let me say here and now, that **L B** is a well respected journalist and I'm proud to know him.



Hunter S is no longer missing . . . anything other than a Bloody Mary, anyway. He's back — as this PCW Show snap avec champagne reveals

His reputation on the Washington Post was second to none . . . though he never gained quite the same name for his stirling service on the Christmas Post here in London. L B had taken his place on the BEYOND stand, waiting for that one big story. It's not every day you see this sort of devotion to duty. Meanwhile, I decided to roam . . .

Drunker by the minute, thanks to some classic **Baxter** hospitality, I wandered in a daze, bumping into a bearded chap who claimed to be **Graeme Kidd**. Could this really be the same man who once sported a number one crop and DMs? Obviously his position as a responsible publishing executive has done strange things to him.

What else? **Mandy Keyho** of PIRANHA invited me for a midnight dip, though as the suggested pool was the piranha infested tank on their stand I made an excuse and left, just in time to bump into MIKRO-GEN's **Mike Meek**, sporting a new suit every bit as flash as the company's new logo. Obviously Mike's been taking my style hints after all!

On seeing my poor, bloodshot eyes, hunky **Tom Watson** of ODIN and FIREBIRD gave me a pair of shades so dark that they were opaque. Then he led me out into the middle of the main road and left me there! Seeking sanctuary I slipped upstairs, to a small side chamber where I found **Peter Probert** of MICRONET cast adrift, without even a phone line to his name. Taking pity on him I sat and sipped a little wine and we got happily horizontal together.

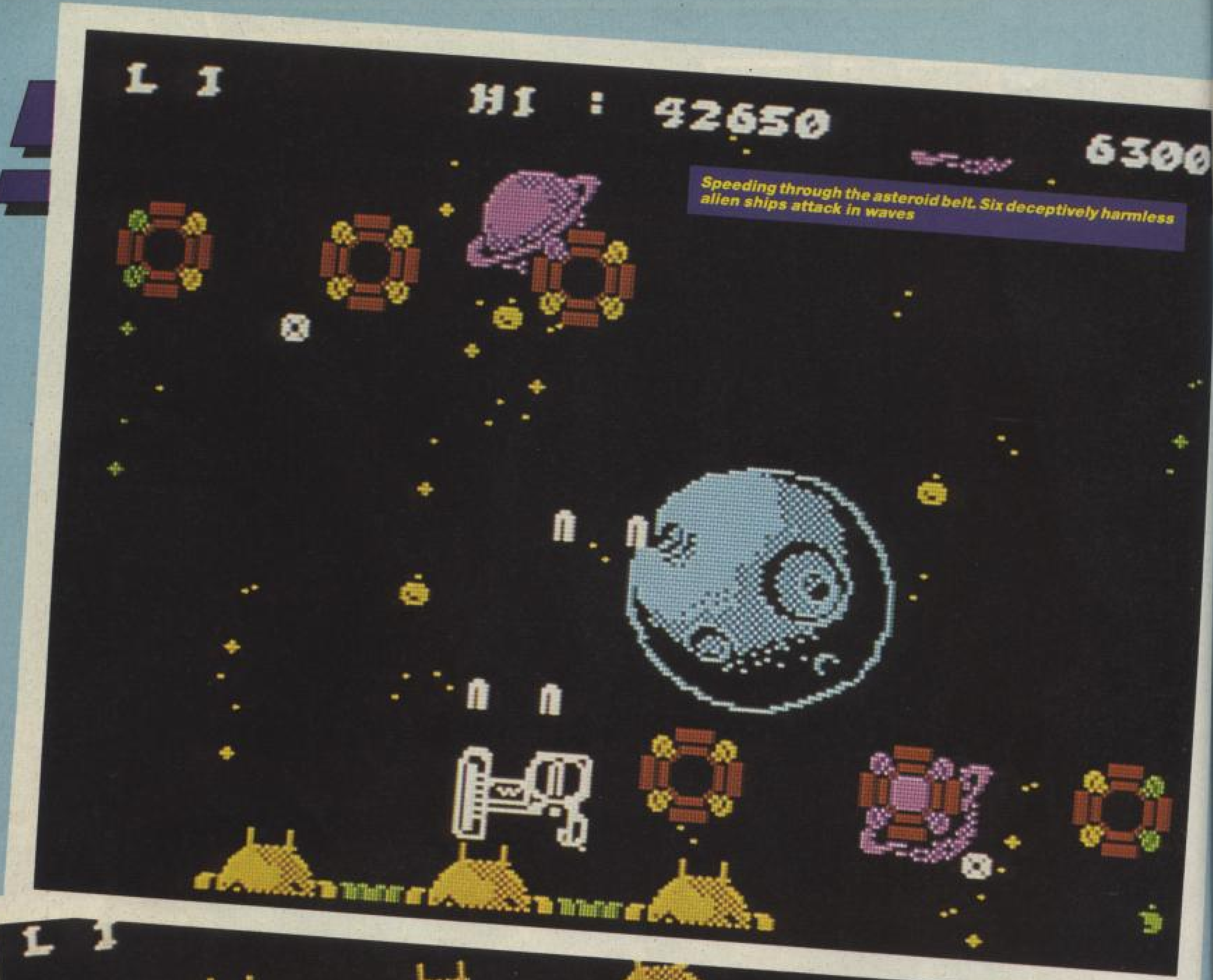
And on it went. On and On. On and on and on and . . . I was on a beach, the surf washing around my feet. It had all been a nightmare!

And then I woke up, lying in the gutter outside Olympia, and **Jane Smith** was pouring a bucket of water over my boots. "Come on," she told me, "we've got to get a key cut." And so we did . . . but that was quite definitely another story!!!

Yours in fear, loathing and traction

Hunter S Minson


FIRELORD
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Get spellbound – and hot – with this unique medieval arcade adventure.
Another fast-moving, richly animated scorcher from 1985's Programmer of the Year, Steve Crow – author of "Wizard's Lair" and "Starquake".
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Speeding through the asteroid belt. Six deceptively harmless alien ships attack in waves



An orbital alien installation gets its come-uppance, with the control centre disintegrating at bottom centre. You're the white space craft



L·I·G·H·T·F·O·R·C·E

Lightforce is the Punishment Arm of the Galactic Fighter Command. If a law is broken then Lightforce is on hand to ensure the penalty is paid. And nobody escapes.

Lightforce is also the first game from the Faster Than Light label. This is an off-shoot of GARGOYLE GAMES, the people responsible for the acclaimed scrolling graphic adventure quests *Tir Na Nog*, *Dun Darach* and *Heavy on the Magick*. The new label allows programmers **Greg Follis** and **Roy Carter** to depart from a game style which they have made their own, and to take on mainstream arcade entertainment.

The Terran-settled Regulus system, set in an unobtrusive corner of the galaxy, is in trouble. Inoffensive and ignored by most races, it becomes the unusual target for marauding aliens. These aliens are very tough cookies and in no time at all have taken over the peaceful Terran system, culling many of its inhabitants and enslaving the rest. Vengeance is obviously called for.

The GEM council's reaction to this invasion of one of its colonies is predictably swift and violent. They order all Lightforce fighters in the Regulus sector to attack. Unfortunately, your fighter turns out to be the only craft in the vicinity and, though daunted by the prospect of taking on umpteen aliens on your tod, you prepare to engage the enemy. Yours is not to reason why . . .

CRITICISM

" My first sight of this game at the PCW show turned me into gibbering wide-eyed heap on the floor. Lightforce **has been in the office for quite a while now and so far it hasn't been left alone for longer than ten minutes — almost a new office record. The graphics are THE BEST that I have seen on a Spectrum shoot 'em up, if not in any game. The characters are large, colourful and very fast, and the background scrolling is excellent. Sound is a touch disappointing, as there are no tunes, but the effects more than make up for that. Gameplay is extremely compelling but very hard, which can be a little disheartening. I'd recommend this to everyone who likes a good shoot 'em up as you won't find one better for a long, long time. "**

The game is split into five sections. Emerging from the light-drive tunnel, you find yourself in the thick of an asteroid belt. Blasting a path through the debris you see below vast alien installations of weapons systems, armament pods and energy domes circling every planet. The odds are ridiculous. In a nano-second the aliens have registered the arrival of an intruder and despatch ships to intercept. Cool, calm and collected, and chanting the motto 'Lightforce is for REVENGE', you set the lasers and start blasting.

Before descending to the planet surface the massive orbital stations must be annihilated, and then there are further alien control stations to be destroyed in the jungle below. After the jungle section play progresses to the ice planet, then the desert planet, and finally the alien factories. For every four control stations destroyed a bonus is added to your score.

CRITICISM

" GARGOYLE's first release on the new Faster Than Light label is a definite winner. The game is extremely playable and features lots of colour that is well implemented in the large and detailed graphics. Sound is weak, but there are some nice spot effects. Lightforce **is easy to get into and contains all that the average shoot em upper would like, with a play area which scrolls smoothly and contains lots of things to blow up. However, as with other games of this genre you may find yourself bored after a time and £8.00 is quite a lot to pay. "**

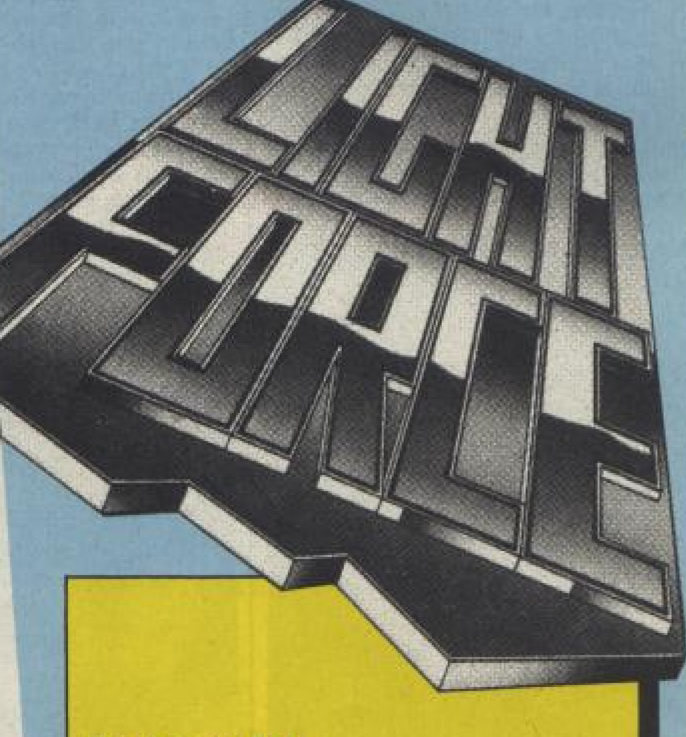
CRITICISM

" After thrilling to the PCW Show preview, I eagerly awaited the arrival of Lightforce. **Usually any game I wait for with such anticipation is bound to disappoint me, but this game really is the exception to the rule! Something has to be said about the graphics, but how can I do them justice? Colour is absolutely amazingly superbly stunningly (help, where's my Thesaurus?) brilliant, and the game is undoubtedly one of the best shoot 'em ups on the Spectrum. Maybe I have some sort of sadistic craving to destroy aliens in a fast-moving, scrolling landscape, but if that's the way it is, and if I can play and play** Lightforce, **then I'm happy. Okay? This game certainly is! "**

The screen action scrolls downwards and the aliens swoop in from every conceivable angle, each type of alien craft attacking in separate waves. The Lightforce fighter has sensitive controls and can move upwards, from side to side and downwards if you want to beat a hasty retreat.



Now you're swooping in low over the jungle planet, loosing off a few missiles at fast-approaching aliens. There's another



Producer: FTL
Retail Price: £7.95
Author: **Greg Follis, Roy Carter**

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable: up, down, left, right, fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: slick
Use of colour: revolutionary
Graphics: most impressive
Sound: limited, a few spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: five scrolling play areas
General rating: state of the art shoot 'em up

Use of computer	92%
Graphics	95%
Playability	91%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	90%
Value for money	89%
Overall	91%

GLIDER RIDER

Producer: Quicksilva
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Binary Design**

Joining the 'Silent but Deadly' squadron is not a good idea if you're looking for a quiet life. Any dirty jobs going, and you get it.

This one looks particularly nasty. A bunch of arms dealers called the Abraxas Corporation, with few scruples and 'no questions asked, John', are causing a bit of a problem. So the World Council, in its infinite wisdom, has decided that the Abraxas Corporation has got to go, and the lads at the good old SBD squadron are the ones to do it. 'I mean, boys, we'd do it ourselves, but what with the island being made of plastic and therefore invisible to radar, we thought we'd give you the honour.'

When our brave chaps get to the island, they discover that some joker from the armoury section has been taking a little practical mickey. Instead of a rather fast jet and a couple of nice thermonuclear jobs, you've ended up with a convertible hang glider and a handful of grenades. Terrific.

Fortunately Abraxas has designed its plastic island with lots of nice hills scattered all over it. So the technique is to zip around the island with the hang glider cunningly disguised as a motor bike. Then scoot down a handy hill, and launch into the air by quickly reversing the direction of movement.

The object of the mission is to bomb everything in sight on the island. Unfortunately, things can only be bombed from the air, and as soon as you take to the ether, the local laser opens up — thus draining energy. Our hero starts his quest with 100 energy points; at zero, he's a goner; and he can become shark food if any careless flying is done over the sea.

The trick is to head-butt a radio mast — this makes the local laser base go a bit loco — then take to the skies quickly before the laser gets itself sorted out and bomb the reactor which tends to be very close to the laser base.

There are ten of these reactors scattered around the island, all of which have to be taken care of in half an hour, otherwise the rescue sub takes off, leaving our hero stranded. Stockpiles of grenades have been left lying around the place to which he can help himself whenever he likes. Well, they are arms manufacturers, so you would expect to be able to put your hands on a bit of ordnance when needed.

The screen display is in the now customary 3D perspective with the action flipping from screen to screen as necessary. The graphics depict the main base complex, including the factory, and the wooded surroundings of the base which contain the reactors you are out to destroy along with plenty of hills to launch the hang glider. On the ground, four direction controls move the motorbike in the corresponding four directions. When in the air, left and right turn the hang glider, and forward and back cause it to climb and dive. On touching the ground the hang glider reverts to its motorbike form.



Up, up and away. You've taken out one reactor — the broken eggshell in the foreground — but now a laser tower's getting shirty . . .

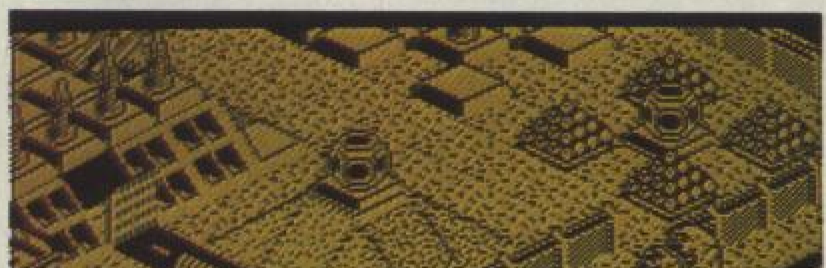
CRITICISM

● " **Good news first.** Glider Rider **has nicely drawn graphics (and a great tune if you own a 128). After that, I'm afraid, it's a bit of a disappointment. Once the technique of hitting a nearby radio mast, finding a convenient slope and taking off is mastered, the game is rather dull. Whether you can actually take off when you try seems entirely random. It's a nice idea, a lot of trouble has gone into the graphics and the animation of the character is good, but I just can't rate it that highly, because it's practically unplayable. "**

● *" For those depraved non-128K/Plus 2 owners out there,* Glider Rider *is a fun sort of game, and worth checking out, as the concept, playability and addictiveness are all very good. When playing the soundless 48K version, I was reasonably happy with it, but it's the sound of the expanded version that really makes it top notch — on the 48K it's merely good. "*

● " I'm not overly impressed with this offer from Quicksilva since it isn't half as playable as it could have been. Because the playing area is nice, large and easy to get lost in and the blurb on the inlay sets the scene very well, on your first go it's very easy to get right into the sprit of the game. The graphics are very good — the playing area excellently drawn and so is your character. There's very little flicker and next to no colour clash as well. Unfortunately, sound on the 48K machine is limited only to the odd spot effect — it's brilliant on the 128K version. On the whole I found it very hard to get anywhere in *Glider Rider* and I suspect it will need a lot more practice to complete it than I have time for. "

On yer bike! Scoot round the enemy industrial complex, find a nearby hill and go into glider mode





COMMENTS

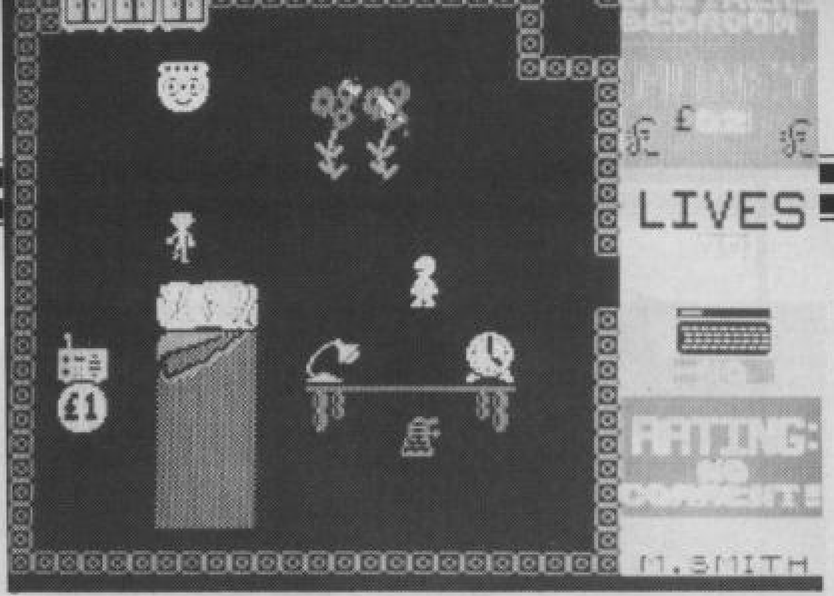
Control keys: re-definable
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair or Cursor
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: good
Graphics: excellent
Sound: poor on the 48K, but superb tunes and FX on the 128K
Skill levels: 1
Screens: 100
General rating: a bit of a let down for faithful 48K-ers but still a well above average and original game.

Use of computer	86%
Graphics	90%
Playability	79%
Getting started	76%
Addictive qualities	77%
Value for money	79%
Overall	80%

Since the differenes between the 48K and 128K are rather obvious in *Glider Rider*, we thought we should indicate the ratings separately. The additional sound has most effect on ratings like playability and addictivity. Here's one critical comment for the 128K version:

" What can I do, except go 'rave, rave rave' over the indescribably superb music in this game? There is just no competition for this (as I write) in the aural stakes, as far as any Spectrum games go. *Mikie, Ping Pong, Knight Tyme*, all their tunes are put to shame by the stunning soundtrack and FX of *Glider Rider*. "

Use of computer	96%
Graphics	90%
Playability	89%
Getting started	79%
Addictive qualities	90%
Value for money	85%
Overall	92%



Thingy walks towards the bed in search of another pound coin for his Spectrum fund. He's the little guy above the alarm clock

THINGY AND THE DOODAHS

Producer: Americana
Retail Price: **£2.99**
Author: **Michael Smith**

Our hero's parents are obviously rather scatter-brained people as they've christened their son Thingy. In fact this absent-mindedness runs in the family because Thingy refers to everyday objects around him as doodahs and thingummybobs. Is it any wonder that a lad so dim has managed to loose his precious Spectrum?

Thingy has to scamper round trying to get £60 together so that he can buy a new one before his parents find out that it's missing. (Budget game, budget Spectrum!) The Thingy household is chaotic and Thingy can find a bit of the money which he so desperately needs just by hunting through his brother's bedroom and other rooms in the building.

However, some of the money belongs to the Doodahs and they are understandably reluctant to part with it just so Thingy can buy himself a new computer. They manifest themselves in various hideous forms and set out to terrorise Thingy wherever he goes.

There are different sorts of Doodahs. The most deadly are the vicious Whatsisnames. Others reside under the splendid titles of Thingummybobs, Whatchamacallits and the fiendish So-and-sos. These perishing little objects never give up trying to protect their cash. Contact with the nasties costs Thingy one of his ten lives.

At the side of the main screen a panel shows Thingy's progress in the game. At the top is a box showing how much money he has managed to collect and below the cashometer a pink box reveals Thingy's lives.

Will Thingy be able to replace his Spectrum in time? Or will he suffer the tortures of withdrawal symptoms first? Only you can answer this.

CRITICISM

● **" What a strange name for a typical budget game! The graphics are very small and contain very little animation. Colour is used lavishly but clashes aren't too much of a problem as the characters are all fitted in their own little space. I don't think the game is very playable as it lacks constant speed of travel — the screen locks up when there's a lot on it — and you're limited to four directions. This is definitely the worst game that AMERICANA have brought out so far. It is totally unoriginal and, at three pounds, overpriced. "**

● *" The loading screen is fantastic: in over two years of games reviewing I have never seen such a colourful, pretty and interesting screen, and the way it loads up even knocks* Fighting Warrior *into a cocked hat. Unfortunately, the game itself falls short, playing in a similar way to* JSW *and the like. The graphics are of an average standard for this type of game: the characters are all nicely animated, but are small and badly detailed. The sound is not good — there are a few well placed spot effects and a dire tune which you can turn off if it annoys you.* Thingy and the Doodahs *is not an unplayable game and it represents quite good value for just three pounds but it didn't really appeal to me. It is unoriginal and rather out of date. "*

● " Ah, poor Thingy has broken his Spectrum; what a wally as it says on the inlay! Honestly, if this is the sort of game he plays on it, then I'd leave it broken, and buy another computer, because this is the sort of low quality cheapy game that gives us Spectrum owners a bad name among the other computer users of this world. The loading screen is very good, in the way that the picture draws from the bottom corner up. The graphics, though are very primitive, and the game itself is unplayable to a very great degree. Though low in price, as far as I'm concerned, Thingy can keep his Doodahs, because I don't want them, that's for sure. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q up, A down, O left, P right, X pause, C un-pause, Z tune on, CAPS SHIFT tune off
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: bright and cheerful
Graphics: simplistic
Sound: awful tune
Skill levels: one
Screens: over 200
General rating: A fairly basic game

Use of computer	44%
Graphics	42%
Playability	39%
Getting started	45%
Addictive qualities	36%
Value for money	43%
Overall	**39%**

STORM

Producer: Mastertronic
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Simon Freeman**

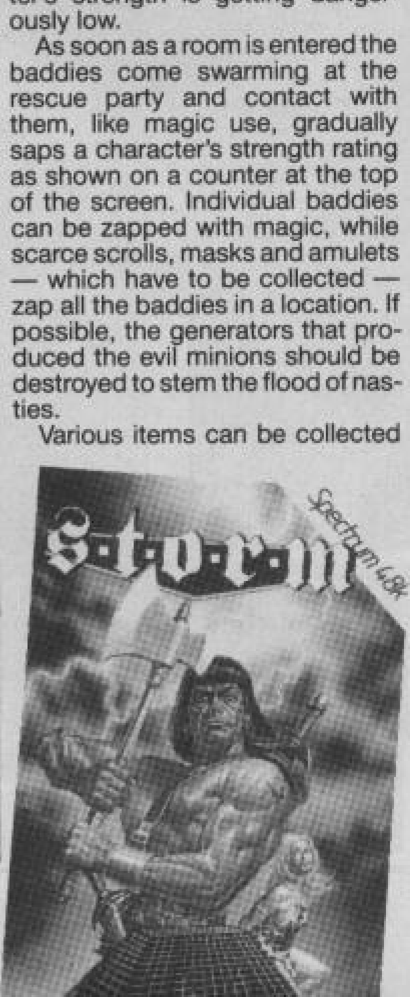
Storm the warrior is your actual everyday superhero. Bold, fearless, heroic righter of wrongs, and he even remembers to put his Y—fronts inside his trousers! But, while he was off doing daring deeds, some bloke by the unlikely title of Una Cum has made off with his old lady and locked her in his lair.

Storm is a bit put out by all this, and pausing only to enlist the aid of the equally oddly named Agravian the Undead, he legs it over to Una's place to free his beloved.

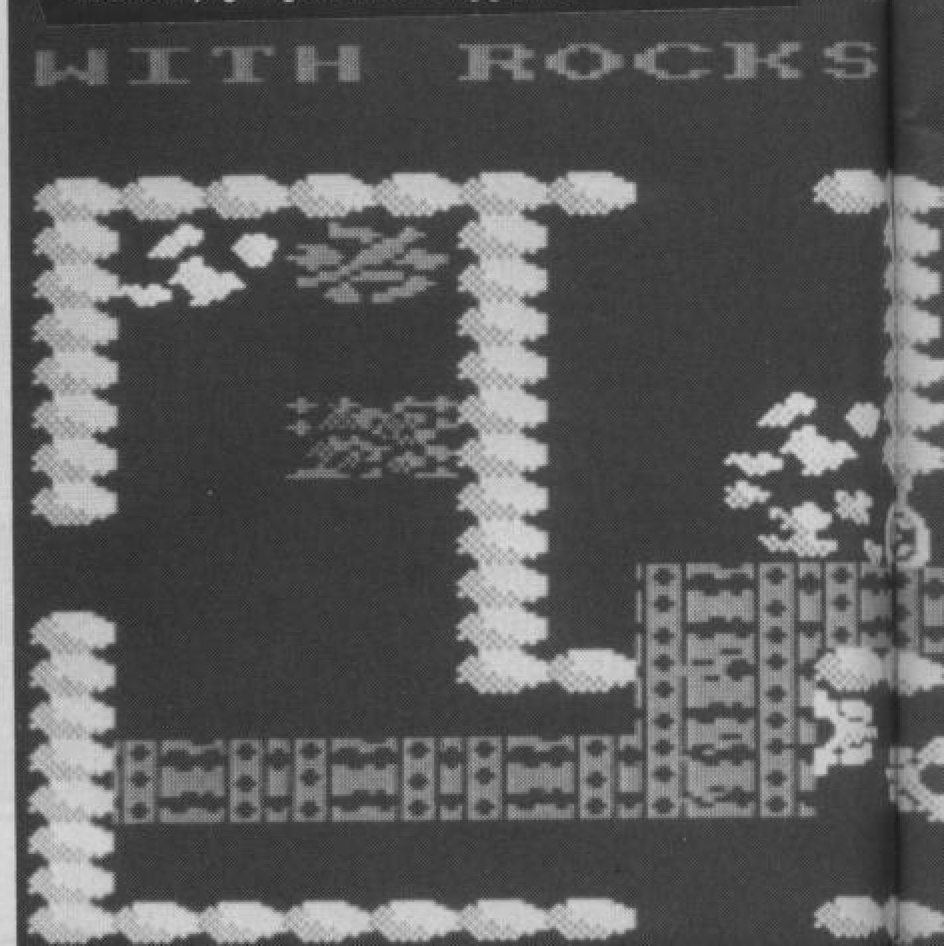
To free Corrine, three snake brooches have to be collected. The action is viewed from above, and each location is a mini-maze. As the hero (or heroes if the game is being played in two-player mode) leaves the current location, the next room flips into view. A scrolling message below the status area describes the location and lets the player(s) know if a character's strength is getting dangerously low.

As soon as a room is entered the baddies come swarming at the rescue party and contact with them, like magic use, gradually saps a character's strength rating as shown on a counter at the top of the screen. Individual baddies can be zapped with magic, while scarce scrolls, masks and amulets — which have to be collected — zap all the baddies in a location. If possible, the generators that produced the evil minions should be destroyed to stem the flood of nasties.

Various items can be collected



Cameron's playing STORM on his own, so he's in control of Agravian Undead, the wizard. The wiz is in the bottom right of the screen, fighting off a marauding guardian





Two Ninjas close in on you on the lowest platform. Seventy seconds remain in which to despatch them with a well placed kick

KAI TEMPLE

Producer: Firebird
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Ian Wright**

High up in the Himalayas there is a mystical Kai temple. This holy shrine is guarded by fearsome martial arts warriors: Ninjas and the Divas. Their sole job is to protect the treasures and religious artefacts within the temple, and very dedicated to their vocation they are too. It is into this potentially dangerous situation that you unwittingly stumbled . . .

It is impossible to escape from the Kai temple, unless you happen to be a martial arts supremo. The Ninjas can only be despatched by an accurately timed combat kick. When one of these kicks hits home, the Ninja dissolves into a crumpled mass on the floor. Divas can only be killed by lobbing a dagger into their torsos.

Each screen consists of three platforms patrolled by a number of guards. Your character can leap between the platforms to avoid flying arrows and daggers and must chase around the screen dealing death. Each screen has a time limit indicated by a counter — if the guards aren't eliminated quickly enough, the game ends. Contact with a Ninja or Diva result in the loss of one of your three lives.

As you progress in the game, more and more nasties have to be dealt with and time limits get shorter. Every time three screens are cleared a bit of bell ringing is needed before the game moves to the next level. Pounding on the fire key makes a strength bar grow and then your man leaps onto a see-saw, propelling a ball into the air. If the bell is rung by the flying ball it's onto the next screen, otherwise it's back to the last section of the temple.

Tibetan air is very thin, and while the Ninjas and Divas are perfectly acclimatised you aren't. Now and again your oxygen starved brain plays tricks, making the task a lot harder — the whole screen turns upside down!

Points are scored for each Ninja and Diva destroyed and for every level completed. There is a high score to beat each game, but the main problem is simply staying alive . . .

CRITICISM

● **"Oh dear, this game is awful. The collision detection is poor, and the graphics are very bad. The noises made during the game don't exactly make you sit up with pleasure, and as far as playability and addictivity are concerned,** Kai Temple **must be one of the most boring games I've played recently. The whole thing is totally unexciting, and well worth steering clear of."**

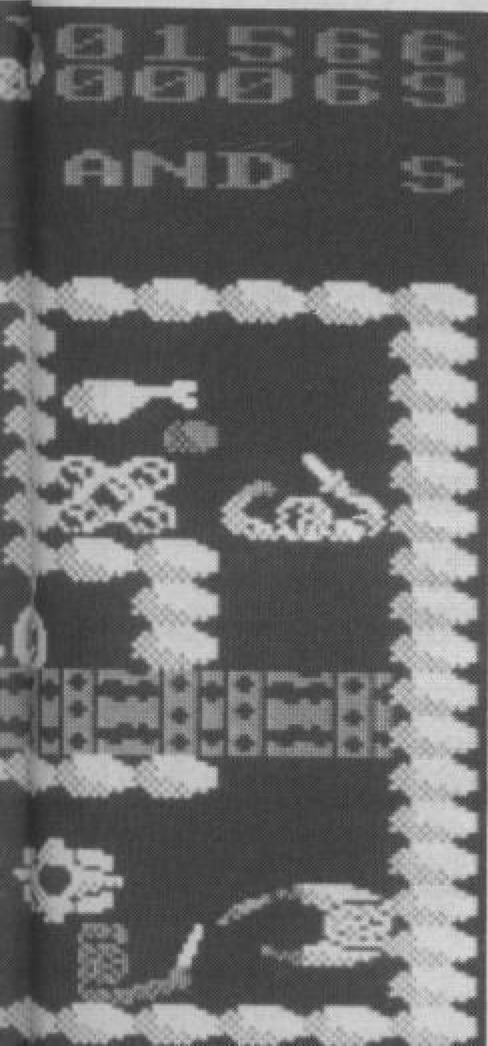
● "Kai Temple *is an extremely boring game. The graphics are far too small for a game that has hardly anything happening in it. I couldn't find anything in* Kai Temple *to show that the programmer had any ability . . . The backgrounds are very simply drawn, and the animation of the characters is nothing special. The way that the screen flips upside down is about as complex as a sausage roll. The game features some very cunning collision detection — you can put your foot right through the opponent and he'll survive. But you can be a few pixels away from him and he'll get you — something to do with bad programming? I couldn't ever go wild over* Kai Temple."

● "Don't be fooled by the loading screen which looks suspiciously like a screen dump from *Way of the Tiger* — the only thing the two games have in common is that they are both beat 'em ups. Although you don't need much in the way of brain power to play this successfully, you do need a lot of patience as this is a very frustrating game mainly due to it's simplicity. The graphics are adequate but not good, the characters are small and undetailed and the backgrounds are mediocre. The sound effects aren't too bad; there are a few nice effects here and there but no tunes. A mediocre game."

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable: up, down, left, right, kick, throw dagger
Joystick: keyboard only
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: monochromatic
Graphics: amateurish
Sound: irritating spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 9
General rating: An uninspiring platform/combat game

Use of computer	43%
Graphics	42%
Playability	39%
Getting started	53%
Addictive qualities	40%
Value for money	46%
Overall	**40%**



in the dungeon, including foodstuffs to boost flagging energy meters, extra scrolls and amulets, and armour. Two player mode gives twice the fire power, but then strength replenishing objects have to be shared out between the two characters.

Cabbalas are very useful, and change the layout of walls in a location, opening up a previously inaccessible part of the room, or possibly blocking the exit . . .

CRITICISM

● **" As budget titles go,** Storm **is a passable effort. If it hadn't been for the rather blocky characters and the poor playability, it would have done better. The way screens can be cleared and made safe gives a good sense of progress, and the playing area is pretty vast. With just a little bit more work this game could have been much better . . . as it is,** Storm isn't very compelling. "

● " *Boring, boring, boring. As you can tell I absolutely loved this game. I have never much liked playing this sort of birds-eye-view, run-around-the-screens shoot'em ups and this game does nothing but justify my convictions. The graphics are slow and jerky and the characters are, how can I put it, mind numbingly boring. The control method is awkward, and takes a lot of getting used to before you can get out of tricky situations quickly. The only nice thing I can say, is that the colour is not bad at all.* "

● " There seems to be a trend towards the mystical 'collect the treasure and dodge the dragons' type games at the moment, which is all well and jolly good fun. *Storm* isn't the best. The graphics on the whole are ugly, the characters are chunky but colourful and fast moving and the playing area is a bit drab. The sound also leaves a lot to be desired: what there is of it isn't really worth listening to. The two player mode is probably the best option the game has, but it takes a little practice not to get in each other's way. My main moan is that controlling your man is very difficult, so it is hard to nip out of trouble or go through doors. I can't really recommend this game as it contains very little worth experiencing. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Storm: N turn left; M turn right; L forward; P fire; ENTER fire amulets. Agravian: X turn left; C turn right; Z forward; A fire; CAPS use scroll; U use mask
Joystick: none
Keyboard play: a little tricky, but responsive
Use of colour: colourful and attractive
Graphics: unremarkable — indistinct with minimal animation
Sound: no tune, raspy effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 48
General rating: A budget *Gauntlet* variant that doesn't quite come off

Use of computer	45%
Graphics	38%
Playability	39%
Getting started	45%
Addictive qualities	48%
Value for money	58%
Overall	**44%**

NIGHTMARE RALLY

Producer: Ocean
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Giga Games**

The engines roar and the crowd cheers. The rally is on. But it isn't until you've manoeuvred around the first obstacles that you realise that this is no ordinary rally, but rather the stuff of dreams — bad dreams.

The idea is to drive through each stage of the rally as rapidly as possible while scoring points. Driving over some objects on the course, such as bushes and shrubs, reduces speed and eventually leads to a blowout making the car harder to handle. Other objects conceal bonus points. Hills are high-scorers too, especially if you manage to fly over them!

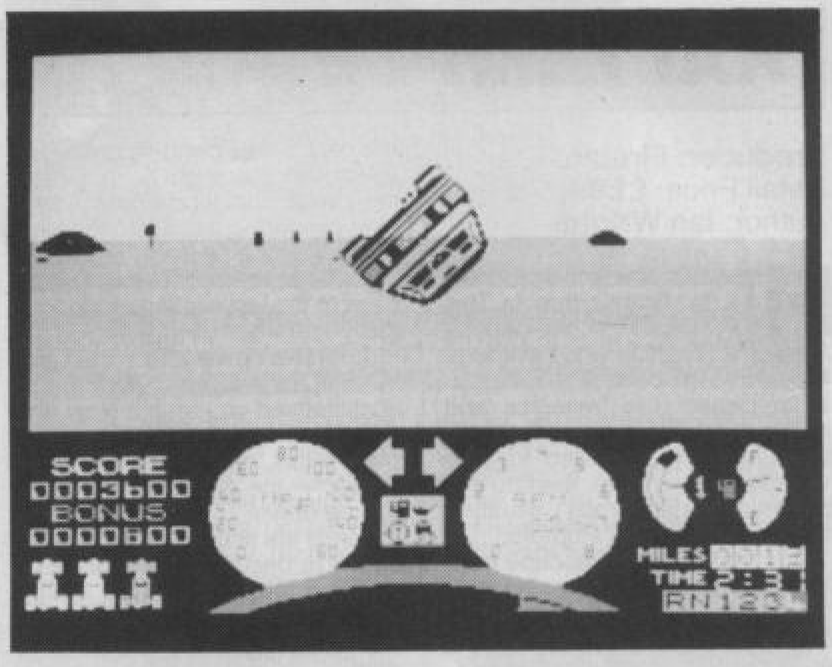
Each stage consists of a slalom course of marker flags and 100 points are awarded for each flag correctly negotiated. Fuel dumps may look as though they pose an awkward problem, but driving at them full tilt sends you soaring over the top to safety and adds points to the score.

This Escort is far removed from the XR3s beloved of Yuppies — it handles in a rather surreal manner . . . Driving very fast at a standing stone does not result in the disaster you'd expect. Instead of bits of broken rally car all over the place you take to the air and can glide over anything in your path. Very handy. If you hit a tree or other largish object the car suffers no damage but time is wasted in backing away from the obstacle and driving round it.

Driving through a pi symbol causes one of three things to happen. Turbo powers might be added to the engine, increasing top speed and acceleration, or Superturbo could cut in, improving performance with the bonus of immunity to collisions. Alternatively, the car might pass through a hyperspace gate and arrive at a random destination in another stage or at the start of the current course. Another magical object to look out for is a pulsating iris which has a very peculiar effect . . .

At the beginning of each stage, the target time and target score are flashed on screen, along with the braking and skid factors that apply. Failing to meet time and score targets costs one of the four lives available. Hitting objects or failing to negotiate the flags successfully makes the little life icon on the dashboard change colour. When the icon is red, the next collision costs a life.

The weather itself is a nightmare — fog, ice, snow, rain and sun all have to be coped with in this gruelling test of rallying skills. Not one for Sunday drivers!

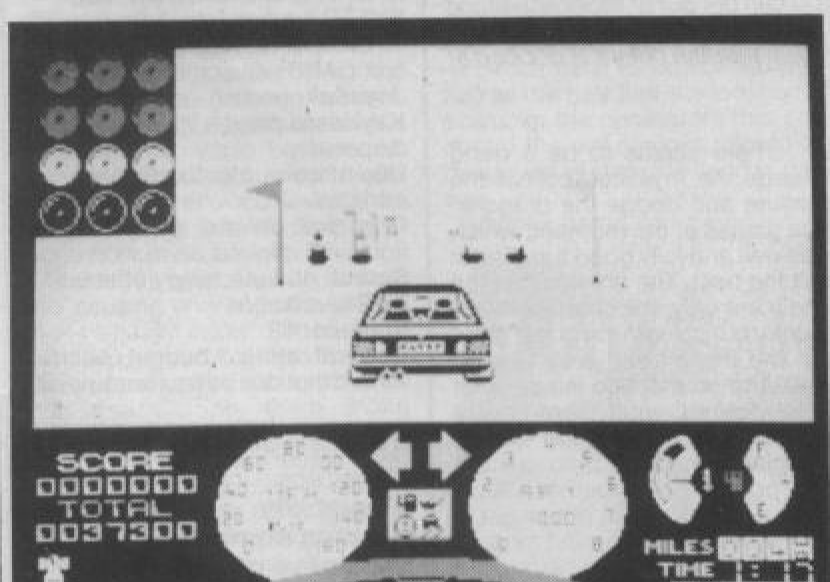


Cameron's certainly a wacky driver! Not the sort of fellow to accept a lift from unless you fancy a quick spin in his motor . . .

CRITICISM

● " **At first play,** Nightmare Rally **seemed to be a very bad game. After a while, though, I found it surprisingly playable. The graphics aren't really stunning, but the trees look pretty when they get close, and the car animation is excellent when you fly off the top of a big mound of earth. It's not the best game I've ever played on the Spectrum, and I doubt very much whether it would rank in my Top 30, but it is a fair game. The main criticism is really the price, as is so often the case with** OCEAN **games. Although many games nowadays are priced around that mark, I feel that games of this quality would be far better value at a budget price. But then again, all games under the sun would be better at a budget price. Ho hum. "**

At the beginning of a stage — the panel of lights at the top left of the screen gives the countdown to the off



● " *I must admit to being a fan of Rally sport and so when* Nightmare Rally *appeared I couldn't wait to see if* OCEAN *had captured all the thrills and spills of the motor sport without the queueing and waiting at special stages. They seem to have got all the right ingredients in* Nightmare Rally *— superb graphics, excellent animation and addictive playability. The Escort is finely detailed, even down to the alloy wheels. Presentation is smart and there is lots of colour and smooth scrolling to add to the appealing layout. Everything is geared towards enjoyment — there's none of this co-driver stuff on boring motorways. The program actually encourages you to mow down cones, fly over trees and somersault over hills — all of these get you extra points and are great fun. Anyone who has fancied him or herself as Jimmy McRea or Louise Walker will love* Nightmare Rally *— although I must admit I didn't get scared once!* "

● *Nightmare Rally* is one of those games which doesn't appear to offer very much until you really begin to play, and then you'll find it has a lot going for it — superb animation, jolly graphics and an abundance of playability. The controls are simple enough to get to grips with in automatic mode, and when you think you can handle a real car, with real gears, you can then embark on manual control, which responds quite well. One feature which really caught my attention was the neat little pause mode, which freezes the screen and then rotates it very smoothly. This game has a lot to offer both fans of racing car games and arcade players. It is one of the better products to emerge from the OCEAN stable recently. "



COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable: up, down, left, right, fire, halt
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: monochromatic motor on coloured landscape
Graphics: fast, effective 3D
Sound: engine sounds, and spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: scrolling courses
General rating: An unusual and compelling 3D car racing game

Use of computer	**78%**
Graphics	**80%**
Playability	**82%**
Getting started	**81%**
Addictive qualities	**83%**
Value for money	**76%**
Overall	**80%**

OLE, TORO

Producer: Americana
Retail Price: **£2.99**
Author:

In most civilized countries, bull fighting has now been banned, although it remains a popular tourist attraction in many parts of Spain. This gory sport has now been brought to your Spectrum courtesy of AMERICANA.

You take on the role of bullfighter who, armed with all manner of very sharp and deadly weapons, competes for superiority with an ill-fated bull. The bullfighter, if successful, is awarded hero status whereas the bull merely gets an extended stay of execution. The fight runs over five rounds with the bull getting increasingly tired and angry and the crowd becoming more and more frenzied.

The first section consists of a series of six passes, either 'Veronica' or 'de pecho', where the bull is tricked into charging the cloak instead of the bullfighter. Points are awarded for each pass successfully made and an overall average of five must be achieved to progress to the next round. If the bullfighter makes a mistake during this section then the bull gets to have its revenge and impales the fighter on its sharp and pointy horns.

Then it's on to the Picador. Mounted on a dummy horse, your bullfighter 'calls' the bull and when it's in range tries to stab it with a very long sword. This must be achieved twice to ensure that the bull is sufficiently weakened to pose little threat in the subsequent rounds. However, if you miss the bull, then it charges your 'horse' and tramples you under.

By the time stage three comes around, the bull is considerably weaker than it was initially, whereas the bullfighter is running high on all the encouragment from the crowd. In this round the bullfighter must perform an energetic Banderilla leap and at the same time stab the bull with his deadly Banderillas. The Banderillas must be stuck into the bull three times before moving on to round four.

This consists of another six sets of non-violent, but very frustrating, passes for the bull. These are different from the first set of passes earlier in the game and serve only to exhaust the bull even further.

Once these passes have been completed then it's on to the last stage, the Matador. Your bullfighter stands alone in the vast and silent arena armed only with knives. He calls the bull by shaking his brightly coloured cloak at him. Enraged, the bull makes one final charge at the bullfighter. At precisely the right moment he impales the bull with all his might. One mistake and the bull will split him from neck to gizzard.



CRITICISM

● **" It's not often that a game as tacky as this gets played so much. I've been playing it for hours now trying to get past the last level and I wont give up until I do. Graphically there isn't really much I can say about this one — nice arena and a couple of very well animated characters. The sound is run-of-the-mill, with two good tunes but no effects during play.. The game is fairly simple, as there are only a few things to do, so really it all boils down to a matter of timing. I enjoyed it, but can see that** Ole, Toro **will lose its appeal once it has been completed. "**

● ***" AMERICANA has again come up with another nice little game that contains nothing much new, but will keep you going for quite a while. It's based on a very gruesome and inhumane sport, and the writers have brought this to the fore, with the bullfighter getting thrown all over the place if the bull hits him — fortunately they have left out the blood. All the characters are well animated — even the crowd jump up and down when you get past each level — but the sound FX are mainly white noise with a beepy Spanish tune at the beginning of each game. All the features are well done, but the game you are left with is very basic and not worth the asking price. "***

● " *West Bank* was a brilliantly playable game, I thought, but *Ole, Toro* certainly hasn't the same

appeal. Bull fighting comes right down on the bottom of the list of sports I like to watch, so a game based on it doesn't really arrive with much of a fanfare. The graphics are reasonable, but the animation isn't up to much. As for playability, it fairs well, but I got very bored quickly. Not bad, overall, but it lacks anything worth even its meagre price. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: calling the bull, B-Space; turning, CAPS-V; passes, Picador, Banderilla, and Matador, Y-P; thrust, Q-T
Joystick: any
Keyboard play: slow to respond
Use of colour: limited, but effective
Graphics: adequate
Sound: uninspiring
Skill levels: five
Screens: five
General rating: original concept, but lacks appeal.

Use of computer	57%
Graphics	61%
Playability	53%
Getting started	57%
Addictive qualities	57%
Value for money	58%
Overall	**57%**





BOMBSCARE

Producer: Firebird
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Jeffery Bond**

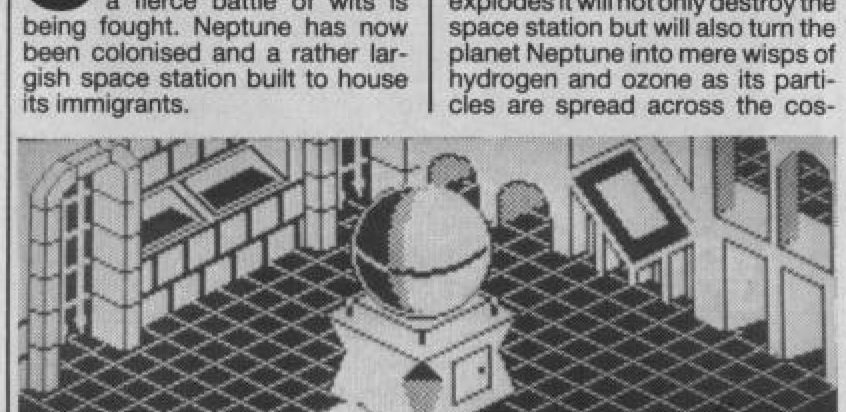
On the planet Neptune, many years into the future, a fierce battle of wits is being fought. Neptune has now been colonised and a rather largish space station built to house its immigrants.

However, nasty aliens are determined to put a spanner in the works. For some reason best known to themselves they have planted a huge bomb somewhere on the station as an act of gratuitous interstellar terrorism. This bomb is so massively big that if it explodes it will not only destroy the space station but will also turn the planet Neptune into mere wisps of hydrogen and ozone as its particles are spread across the cosmos.

This is all a bit worrying. The inhabitants of the space station have been evacuated to a nearby asteroid and now it's just a waiting game. Gone are the days when highly skilled human bomb disposal experts were sent to risk their lives. Nowadays everything's automated. Arnold (which is a very nice name for a robot) is a mechanical disposal droid which is specially programmed to disassemble dangerous bombs. This droid has been sent into the space station on Neptune to locate and defuse the bomb before it's too late. However, it's still up to you to control Arnold and guide him through the corridors and rooms of the station in the quest for the bomb.

Those interfering aliens have set a timer on the bomb. You have around 999 seconds in which to locate the bomb and render it harmless. Not content with just sitting back and waiting for the big bang, the aliens have also sent in their own saboteurs who will do their utmost to get in the way of your efforts. These irritating creatures will sap your droid's energy if they get too close. They can be destroyed by Arnold but will rematerialise after a short time to renew their attacks.

Arnold has been equipped with a nifty laser which makes short work of any marauding nasty. However, the droid has only a limited amount of power so indiscriminate blasting will wear the laser out quite quickly. The droid also has a certain amount of energy which it uses to move around the space station. Each time one the of the nasties gets too close to Arnold, some of this energy is lost. This is represented by a blue wavy line at the edge of the screen. Once all four lives have gone the game is over and you can enjoy the planet's destruction from the safety of the control room.



CRITICISM

● " **FIREBIRD has started to produce some very good budget software lately, some of which would probably sell very well with an £8.00 price tag.** Bombscare **is one of these. Graphically this doesn't offer anything new or particularly stunning — Filmation is getting a little overused and worn around the edges now — but there is a lot of nice detail and your character moves around the various screens smoothly. Sound is disappointing as there are few effects and no tunes. The game plays quickly but controlling your 'dustbin' is a little tricky so you use up a lot of energy crashing into nasties that you can't avoid. Not a bad game, but it lacks a little in playability and addictiveness. "**

● " *Will software houses never tire of making Filmation-style 3D games? I can tire of reviewing them, that's for sure.* Bombscare *isn't particularly bad, but the game just has that 'seen it all before' feel to it. The graphics, yes, are very pretty, it's very similar to all its predecessors. Playability-wise,* Bombscare *is just about up to standard, and it's fairly addictive, too, with some very nice effects, like the planet explosions. Good value for money, but I didn't go ape over it, and I don't think most other people will either. "*

● " Surprise, surprise! Another budget, monochrome, arcade adventure. I found *Bombscare* very easy to get into and good fun to play for the first few goes, but it doesn't contain anything that will make you play it again. The graphics are, as all monochrome games should be, very pretty and detailed, but, alas, there is no sound worth mentioning. There are a couple of nice touches at the end of the game: when you die a little broom comes on the screen and sweeps your remains up (a la *Marble Madness*) and the planet blows up into little bits (a la *Dan Dare*). The rotational movement of Arnold is extremely well done and easy to use, and helps speed up the game. Most people should be satisfied with *Bombscare* for a mere £1.99, but I've seen it all before. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q forwards, O turn anti-clockwise, P turn clockwise, A fire, Z pick-up, X select object, C activate object
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor
Keyboard play: quite responsive and easier than joystick
Use of colour: monochrome
Graphics: familiar 3D
Sound: spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: Around 128 (according to FIREBIRD!)
General rating: well implemented, but run-of-the-mill.

Use of computer	74%
Graphics	80%
Playability	70%
Getting started	67%
Addictive qualities	71%
Value for money	82%
Overall	**74%**

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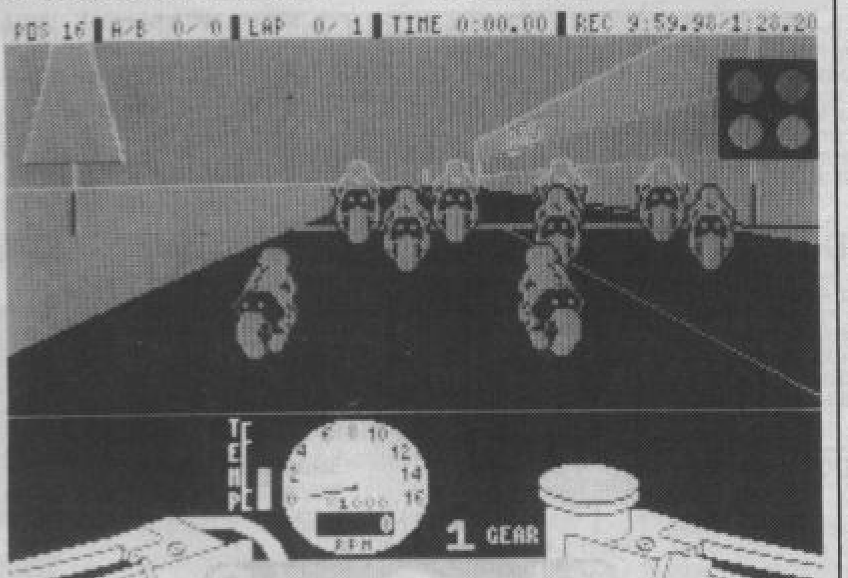
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TT RACER

Producer: Digital Integration
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Rod Swift**

After a very long wait, *TT Racer* has finally arrived. DIGITAL INTEGRATION'S latest simulation puts you in the saddle of a Grand Prix bike. Riding in one of the four solo Grand Prix classes, the ultimate aim is to gain enough points to win the TT Championship. Sixteen riders compete in each race, and up to eight of them can be controlled by humans if the appropriate number of Spectrums are connected using the Interface 1 network.

Twelve circuits are included and four skill levels determine the strength of the opposition and how forgiving the game is when riding errors are made. It is possible to race on a specified track or you can embark on full a Grand Prix season, when the program automatically determines which tracks are used for the class of bike being ridden and sets the appropriate number of laps for each race. Rider information can be saved to tape, so a championship can be raced over several sessions. Practice allows you to get used to a circuit, improving your lap time to determine your starting position on the grid.



On the starting grid, behind the handlebars of your bike. Tension mounts as the start lights count down . . .

The track is viewed over the handlebars, which are shown in the bottom part of the screen. The clutch and brake levers move when used, and the racing dashboard contains a rev counter, temperature gauge and gear number indicator. The road racing dash includes mirrors, a speedometer, fuel gauge and tyre wear indicator — riders coming up from behind appear in your handlebar mirrors.

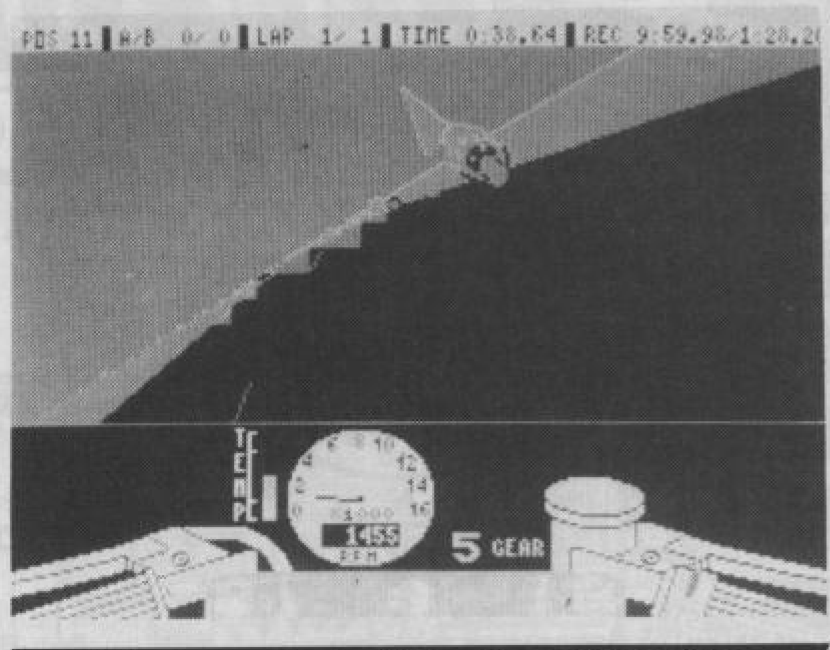
The main screen gives a view of the track, track side markers and riders in front. This view dips or bucks as the bike accelerates, and tilts as the bike goes round corners. The bike can be leaned to the left and right for cornering, while a dab of the clutch when the engine revs are at the right level changes gear up or down.

After every lap, the pitboard at the top of the screen is updated. This gives position, time from the driver ahead of you, and the one behind, laps, your best lap time and the course record. At the end of a lap, you can drive into the pits, and tyres may be changed, fuel added, or the gear ratios tinkered with.

The bikes controlled by the computer do their best to avoid a collision, and crashes tend to happen when you mess up cornering. The effect of a mistake largely depends on the skill level that has been set — at the lowest level fatal crashes are rare. A minor error causes the border to flash and the bike to slow down a bit. If you come off, the engine must be stopped, the bike picked up, and started up again. A fatal crash ends the race for you . . .

CRITICISM

● **" Well, I thought this game was excellent. But then I'm a fan of flight simulators. And that's what this game reminds you of — it has the sort of complexity and detail normally associated with a flight sim. The adaptation of the tracks is very nice, with every slight wrinkle and turn nicely shown. My main criticism is that it's not tough enough. Evon on the European level, if you hurtle into a corner, you'll just end up on the side of the track. It is usually faster to do this than brake and take the corner properly. But apart from this it was great. All the avid biker could want from a simulation. "**



In fifth gear, zooming along the track in pursuit of another rider's machine. The three colour mode is on here, so there's attribute clash on the horizon where the track meets the sky

● *" Despite my initial shock at the slightly weird screen display and the controls, I was fairly impressed at first although I don't think I could play TT Racer for more than a few goes. The graphics resemble those in a flight simulator, which makes the game hard to get used to and rather off-putting to begin with. The other bikes and the scenery are not at all detailed and there is a lot of colour clash — which you can turn off at the expense of the colour on the road. The sound is dire: there are no tunes and the effects used are poor. Generally, if you are really into simulators you may get on with this, but if not there are a few other motorbike racing games around, all of which I reckon are more playable and compelling. "*

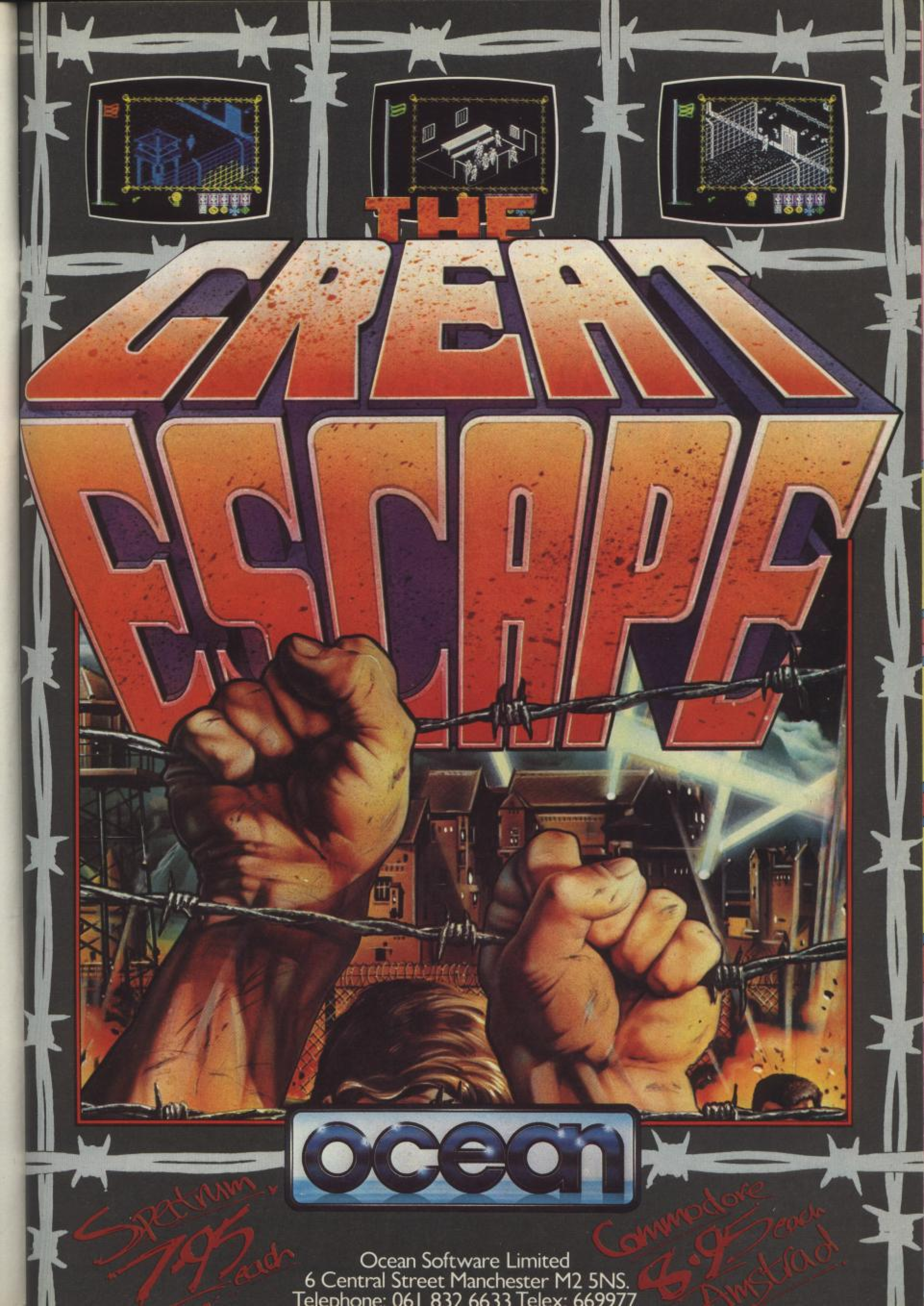
● " This is much more than an arcade motorbike game — as you might expect from flight simulator experts DIGITAL INTEGRATION, this is a very accurate and thoroughly researched piece of programming. A fair bit of effort is required before you get to grips with the game — the mark of any competent simulation — and you may be put off at first. It's well worth persevering, however, and the scope for 'real' championships between friends with Interface 1's adds a whole new dimension to the *TT Racer*. Not a game for the casual arcadester, though . . . "

COMMENTS

Control keys: open throttle 7, 0, P; brake 6, O, L; lean left 5, A, Z; lean right 8, S, X; clutch control SPACE
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: okay, but much better with a joystick
Use of colour: toggles between two colour track, or three colour track (with attribute problems)
Graphics: very much flight simulator style
Sound: not amazingly realistic
Skill levels: four
Screens: twelve scrolling tracks
General rating: A very competent simulation, developed in association with the experts — the Suzuki team. Should entertain any biker/simulation player for a long time

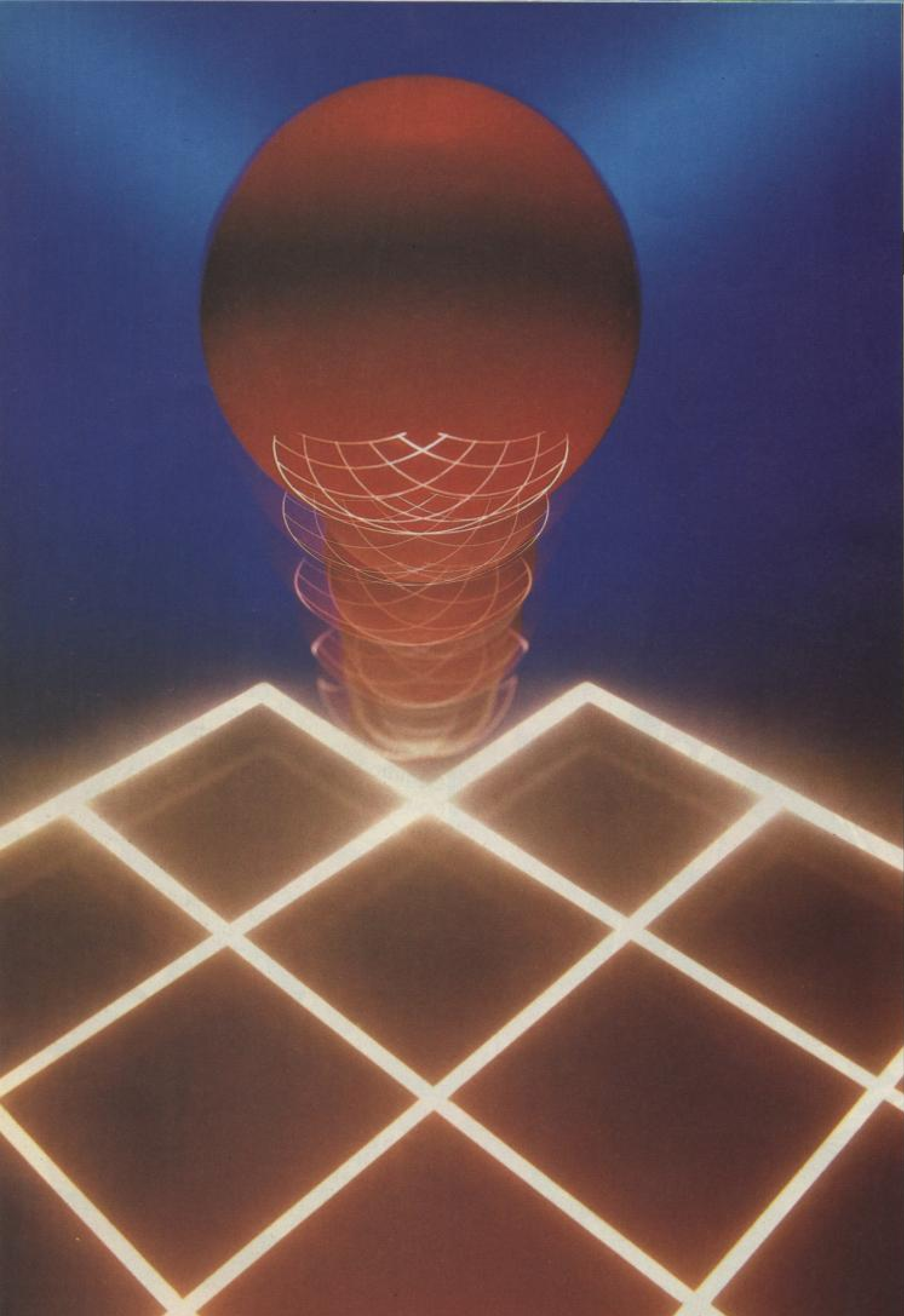
Use of computer	85%
Graphics	72%
Playability	74%
Getting started	69%
Addictive qualities	72%
Value for money	79%
Overall	**78%**




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STREET HAWK

Producer: Ocean
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Paul Owens**

After an intensive eighteen month research program, Jesse Mach's super bike is finally ready to take to the mean streets . . .

Jesse is hell-bent on avenging the death of his best friend, and goes on a one man crusade to deal death to villains wherever they may be. And they're on the street — it's positively swarming with baddies, all driving XR3's for some reason. Did they buy XR3's because they were baddies in the first place, or did the go-faster stripes, natty grey trim and hideous insurance grouping warp their minds? Well, Jesse doesn't go in for all this psychological analysis stuff, a laser blast in the XR3 fuel tank is his answer.

Zooming along, Jesse has to weave his way through the traffic, dodging the bullets fired by the bad guys and doing his best to eliminate carloads of criminals while taking care not to kill innocent citizens. This is no ordinary bike — apart from the laser cannon, it can leap into the air, and a well timed sproing can often avoid a collision. A crash or blast from a villain's gun isn't immediately fatal — the bike can take a fair bit of damage before packing up on Jesse — but reckless driving leads to the end of the game. If too many civilians are wiped out, the police give chase and the turbo facility comes in handy for making a quick getaway: a prod on the turbo key give a burst of speed.

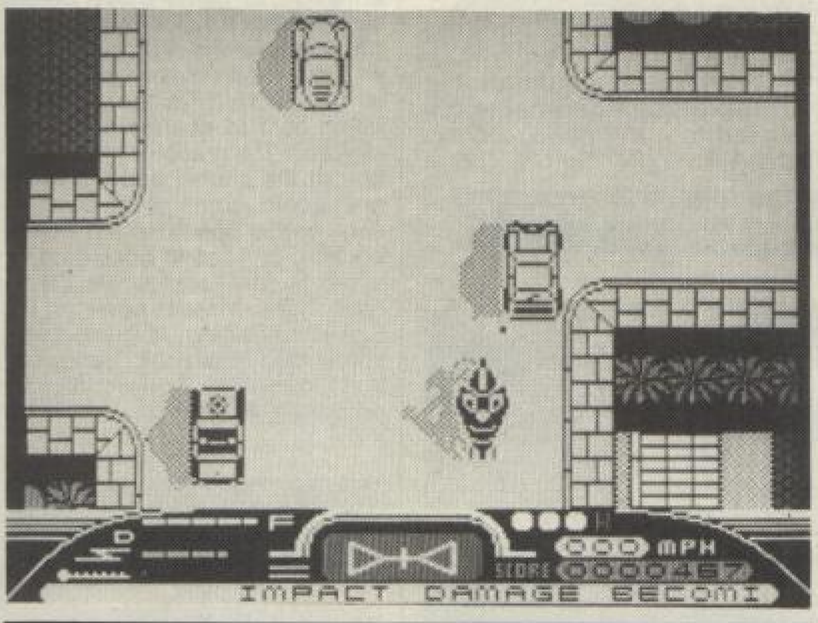
While driving along, a weather eye has to be kept on the status area where gauges indicate the condition of the lasers, the damage received and the temperature of the bike's engine, which risès with each super leap into the air. Fuel also has a habit of being used . . . On the positive side, points are awarded for each baddie car blown up and for each civilian overtaken.

After a bit of cruising the mean streets, Jesse arrives on the scene of a crime — another bunch of life's social misfits is robbing a liquor store. Does he get off the old bike and chew over a few of the finer points of behavioural therapy with the criminals, persuading them to abandon this life of crime? Does he heck! Out with the old rifle with laser sights, and it's time for a spot of *Missile Command* style baddie killing as they run to their getaway van.

All the villains at the robbery scene must be shot before the second mission can begin. Then it's back to the road chase sequence, only this time a high bonus is awarded for killing off an underworld Big Cheese who motors along in a black sedan. Once the Sedan has been disposed of, Jesse and his bike return to base for a refit so the major confrontation with the Master Criminal can begin with the bike in tip-top condition. In the final street sequence the Top Man has to be blown out of his Porsche whereupon ultimate vengeance becomes Jesse's.



The shootout at the liquor store — kill all the baddies and you can move to the next sequence: chasing the limo



Riding along the mean streets with an XR3 full of baddies just ahead and the copcar to the left

CRITICISM

● **" Well, was it worth the wait? Not really. This might have been a good game eighteen months ago, but it is just another vertically scrolling race game with a few knobs on. The graphics are pretty, and there are some neat effects like jumping and the shadows on everything. There's nothing very original or demanding about this game and somehow it doesn't seem to have been finished off — for instance, when the bike finally packs up as a result of too much 'collision damage' the game grinds to a halt after you lose control. No doubt the licensing deal will ensure it sells well . . . "**

● *" A year and a half wait for this trite game . . . come on* OCEAN *are you more concerned with your licensing deals than with the quality of your games? I was expecting great things from this game until I saw how bad* Knight Rider *was, well thankfully this is a little more playable than KR but it still isn't state of the art. The graphics are very strange indeed — judging from the shape of your bike it was made in the nineteen twenties. The rest of the traffic is fairly well done but some of it is a little suspect. The streets scroll well and are excellently detailed. Soundwise* Street Hawk *doesn't really offer anything new: there are a few mediocre spot effects but no tunes.* Street Hawk *isn't bad game, but it is very easy to complete and not very compelling. "*

● " After having seen the version issued for those not-so-lucky people who really desperately needed a copy of *Streethawk* (copies were sold through a mail order catalogue, yonks ago) I expected something a little different from the game that I loaded into my Spectrum. Though totally unlike its predecessor in everything except the central character, I found the final version of *Streethawk* a lot better than its early incarnation. Despite not being in the top grade category, I enjoyed playing it, and despite the bad feeling that was obviously created by the long delay between advertising and game release, I think this game should go down well amongst the games buying public. Not bad. "



COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable: accelerate, decelerate, left, right, turbo, jump and fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: adequate
Use of colour: monochromatic roadway avoids clashes
Graphics: neat shadowing effect, otherwise unremarkable
Sound: minimal spot effects, no tune
Skill levels: one
Screens: scrolling roadway,
General rating: Fun for a while, but nothing innovative here despite the wait

Use of computer	68%
Graphics	73%
Playability	66%
Getting started	72%
Addictive qualities	68%
Value for money	66%
Overall	**68%**

HARDBALL

Producer: Advance Software
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **B Whitehead**

Well, golly gee, its good to see all you folks out there in limey land taking to our fabulous game of baseball. After all, this cricket you play — what kinda game is that, for gosh sakes? A bunch of guys standing around in white pants all day — or some times for a whole week. You're never going to get peak time programming to swallow that.

So now you'll all be wanting to know how to play this li'l ol' game. Well, first, the manager picks the squad. Nine guys are out on the ball park, and another 16 are back on the bench. You get plenty of dope on the guys in the team. The list gives you their normal fielding position, which way they bat, and their averages. A lot of these guys got silly names — like there's some guy called Einstein, and this guy Asimov, whoever he is.

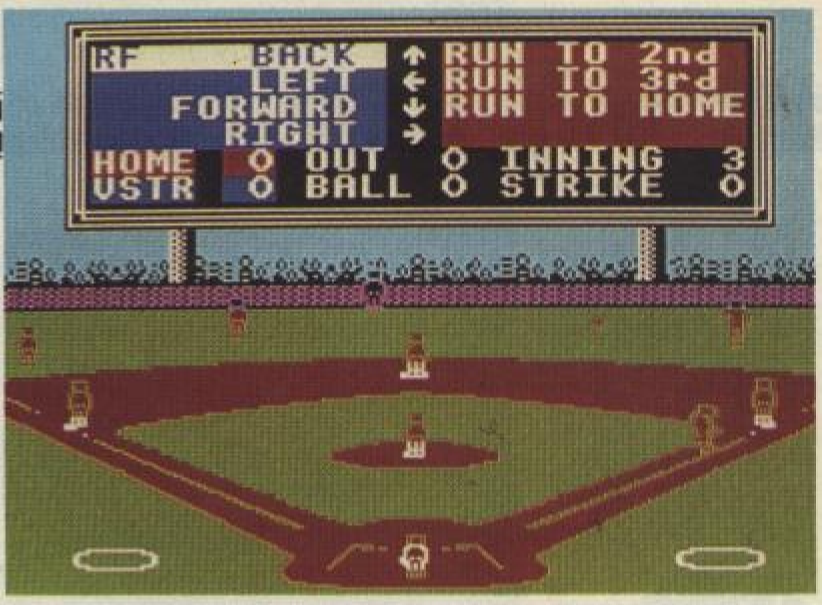
Once you've sorted your line up, it's out to the ball park, to face either the computer or a buddy. The screen shows just the pitcher, hitter, backstop and umpire, with a small insert showing which bases are occupied.

Most of the control in this game is accomplished by moving the joystick and pressing fire. At most stages, there are four possible choices. If you're pitching, then you've got to choose what kind of ball to pitch. There are four choices available out of eight types — and the choice depends on the pitcher you've got. Red hot guys get nifty balls like Fastball!, or a real Joe Demaggio type can throw a curve that'll really blow the batter's mind. Then there's a further choice of whereabouts the ball is aimed: up, down, left, right and centre. Then the pitcher winds up and throws.

Meanwhile, down at the plate, the batter has picked his shot and chooses his moment to strike at the ball. If he misses, then the backstop moves to catch the ball, and the umpire delivers his verdict: was the ball a strike? A hitter gets three strikes in which to hit the ball, after that he's out. If the pitcher throws four balls (what you cricket types would call a no ball, I guess), the hitter gets to walk to first base.

If the hitter connects, the game moves to a view of the whole pitch, with the ball bouncing harmlessly out of bounds, or straight into the arms of a fielder, or, as you hope, streaking for the boundary. Then the fielders have to collect the ball and get it back to the bases. During this time, the fielding player gets to move the fielders around and choose where the ball gets thrown, again by using a menu and moving the joystick and pressing fire. The hitter from a menu to stay where he is, or run on to the next base.

One or two players can participate in *Hardball*. After three men are out, the teams change over. After both sides have been in nine times, the match is over. Each time a man gets round the bases, a point is scored. If the scores are level after nine innings, the game continues until one side wins.



Every pitcher tells a story. Strike three, and the batter's out

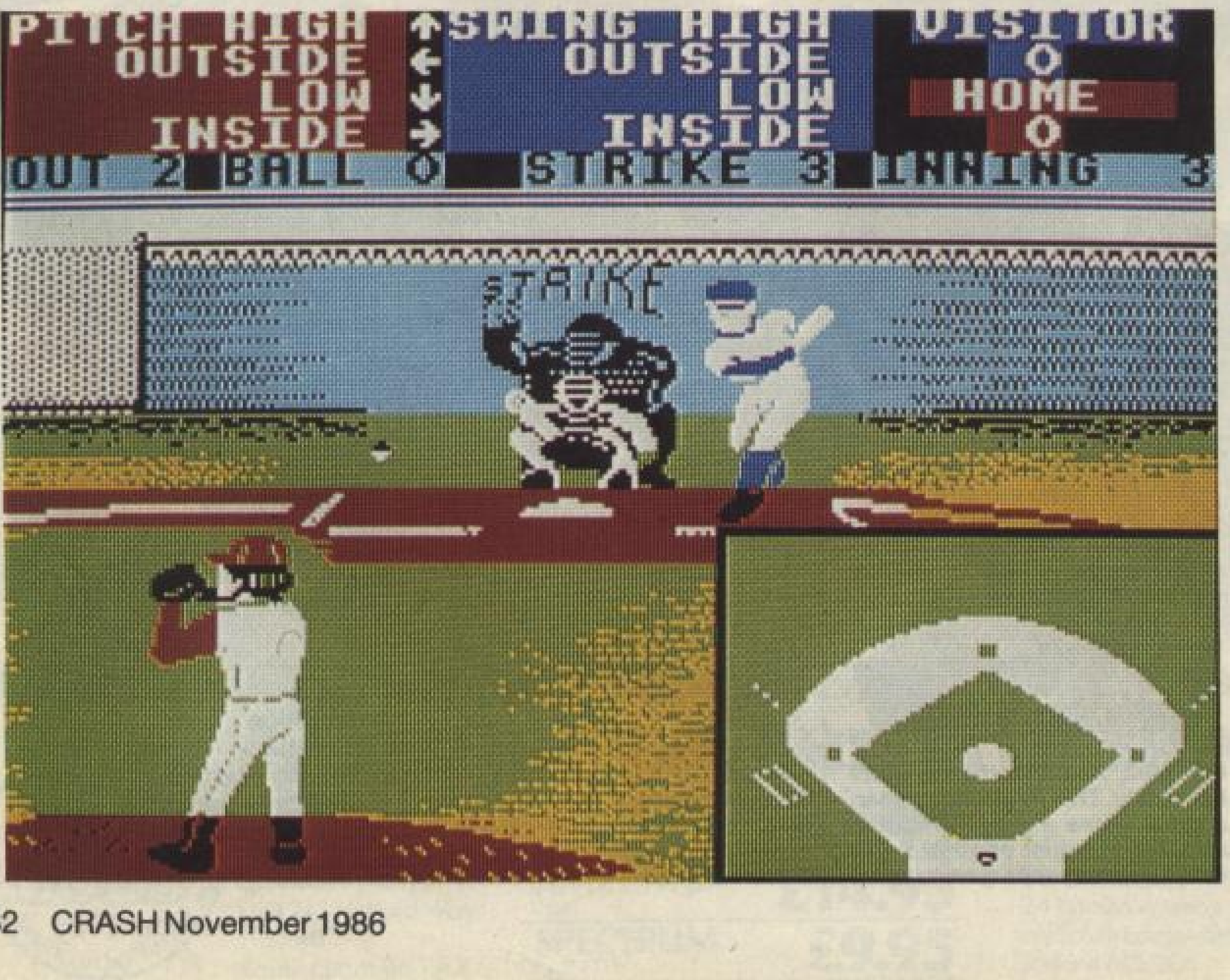
CRITICISM

●" This game has some of the slickest presentation I've ever seen on a Spectrum. The animation on the pitching screen is really nice, coupled with the use of some very pretty shading. And all through the game, there are plenty of decisions to keep your interest up. Only two things mar an otherwise neat game: it's really hard to play, and it hangs around too long on the fielding screen. That coupled with the fact that I don't find baseball the world's most exciting game make this one a near miss for me, although I can see that a lot of hard work went in to making it this good. "

●" *Its strange to see yet another Baseball simulation on the Speccy as it is a sport that has a relatively small following in the UK. This is more pleasing to play than* IMAGINE*'s* International Baseball *as it has captured more of the spirit of the game. The graphics are a bit of a mixed bag. The pitching screen is very well drawn, there are some nice large characters and lots of colour. The playing field, however, leaves a little to be desired. The sound is adequate but not brilliant, the effects are fairly extensive but the tune is poor. The only thing that I really disliked about* Hardball *is that it takes a lot of practice to get anywhere, though once you do, it becomes very addictive and playable too. "*

●" With my limited knowledge of baseball and the fact I find the sport rather tedious to watch, I entered this game with a certain air of scepticism. To my surprise, I totally enjoyed playing it and as far as I can tell it covered all aspects of the sport, with the bonus of being able to change players as required. The graphics and animation of the pitcher and the batter are superb, some of the best I've seen on the Spectrum. I preferred pitching as I found I could do no end of fastballs and curves. On the other hand, I could never hit the ball when batting. All in all, a very impressive baseball simulation and I'm sure it will do wonders for promoting the sport. "

The ball's streaking towards the boundary, none of the bases are covered, and Casey's trying for a home run



COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: better than average
Graphics: technically accomplished
Sound: spot effects and tune
Skill levels: one
Screens: two
General rating: A good simulation of a minority sport

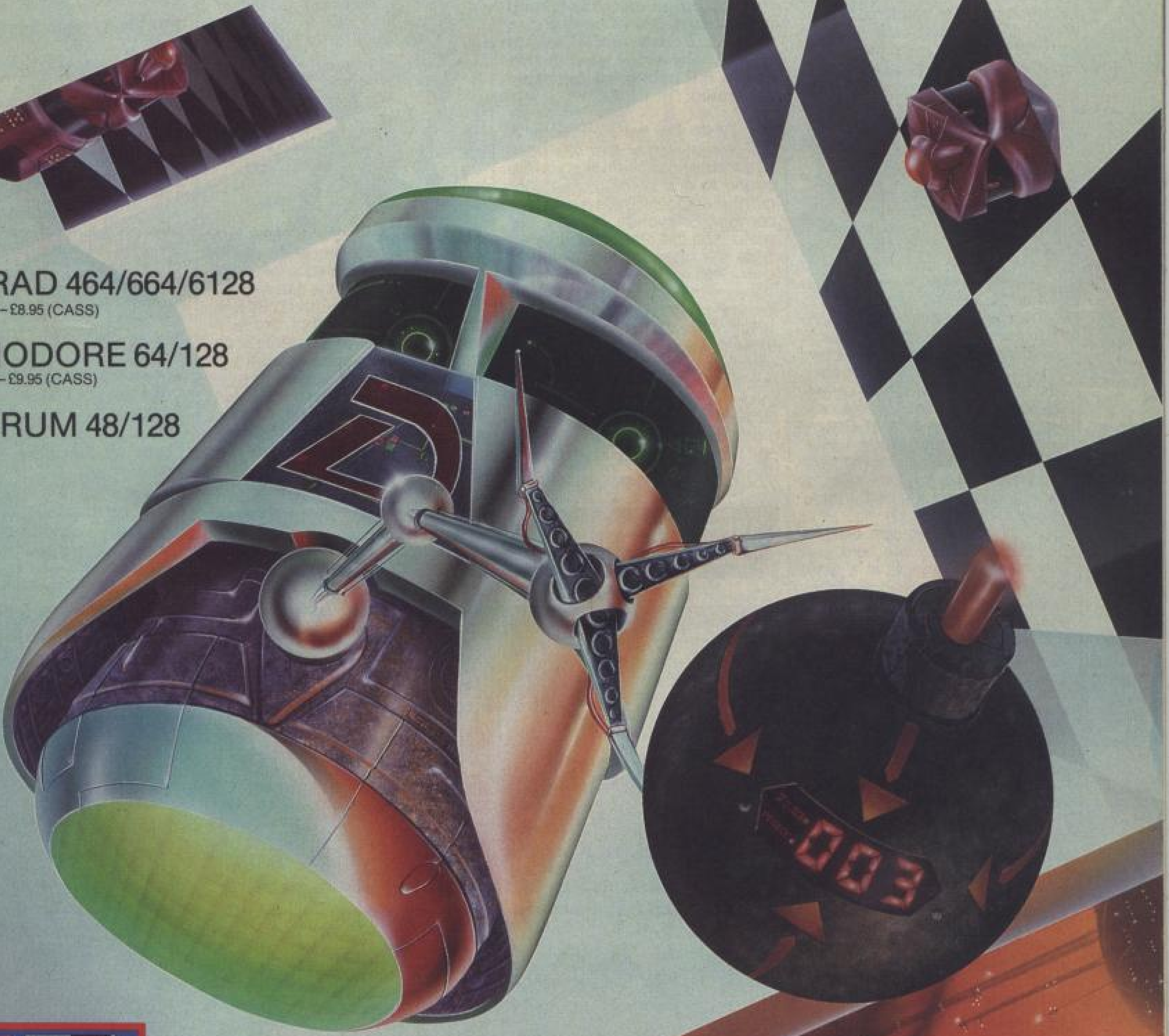
Use of computer	89%
Graphics	89%
Playability	80%
Getting started	78%
Addictive qualities	83%
Value for money	80%
Overall	**84%**

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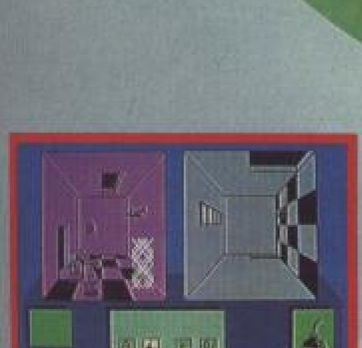


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Screen shot represents C64/128 version

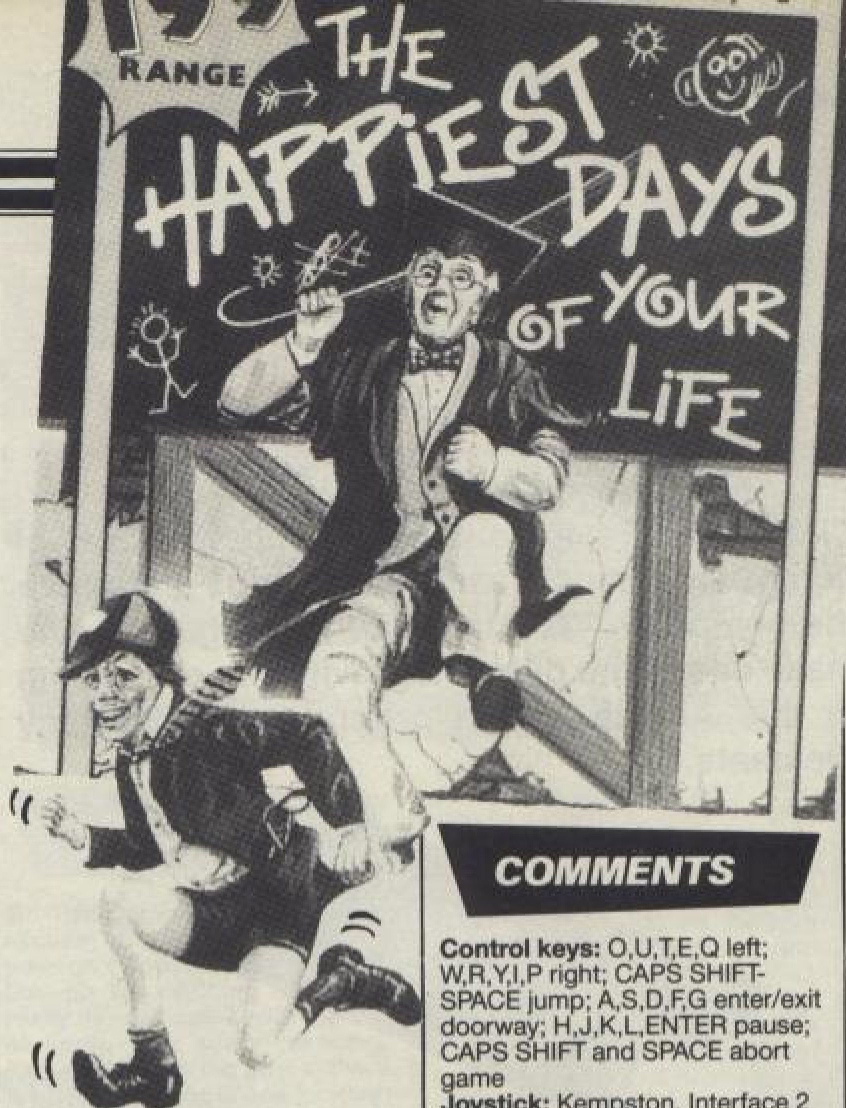
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Reviews



THE HAPPIEST DAYS OF YOUR LIFE

Producer: Firebird
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Martin Sherlock**

The Happiest Days of your Life is a sort of academic Who Dunnit? with you playing the role of chief suspect schoolboy. The Headmaster has had his wallet stolen and is understandably rather miffed about the whole affair. Because you're known as a bit of a tearaway the blame falls naturally on you. A severe caning, a very sore rump and expulsion are all on the cards unless you can clear your name.

The only way to prevent this chain of events from taking place is by roaming around the school and town, collecting items and taking them to the right place to help prove your innocence.

There is something very strange about this school. Instead of meeting fellow students, all the hero encounters are weird objects which suddenly spring to life when he walks into a room and do their best to keep him away from essential objects. Contact with the nasties results in the loss of energy, displayed on a bar in the status area. Grub can be collected here and there for a boost, but once the bar reaches zero one of the three lives is lost.

As in the MIKRO-GEN classic, *Everyone's A Wally* the hero can only carry two objects at a time, and walking over a collectable item swaps it for one of the objects shown in the status area. This particular schoolboy can walk left and right or jump into the air — useful if you want to avoid swapping objects in a location. A wide variety of items can be found in the game, including chalks, a mortar board, a pound note and a betting slip! Each location has a name — which sometimes helps to identify the task that needs to be undertaken there . . . Some of the locations in town are not exactly the sort of place a schoolboy should find himself in — including a pub, betting shop and dingy nightclub.

The aim of the game is to find the headmaster's wallet and maybe collect a little bit of photographic evidence to prove your innocence while you're at it. Making a map would be a good starting point . . .

CRITICISM

● **" This is the first disappointing release out of many from FIREBIRD since the PCW show. It's a great pity as I was beginning to have high hopes for FIREBIRD's Silver Range. Graphically,** The Happiest Days of Your Life **resembles the MIKRO-GEN classic** Everyone's a Wally **in that all the scenes are similar and they are also laid out in a similar way. The characters are fairly well detailed but animated badly and the sound is dire — there are no tunes and very few effects. I didn't really enjoy playing this one as it is unoriginal and badly presented. "**

● *" When you get a character in the games market that has been as successful as Wally has, you are bound to find some clones popping up.* Happiest Days *is a superb copy of* Everyone's A Wally *but without all the other characters. I hope the programmers won't be angry with me for saying that it's a copy — they should be proud of this game. I'm sure it will be very successful at £1.99. The game features all the quirks of the old Wally games, even down to the colour clash. I'm sure that there's still a market for this type of game, but only in the budget market —* Happiest Days *may have got it all sewn up before anyone else has a chance, though . . . "*

● " If you are a Wally Week fan, currently sulking because MIKRO-GEN have abandoned your hero, fret no more. Here's a game in the same mould, only the price is much more interesting! This is a very neat clone of the game style made famous by *Everyone's A Wally*, and should appeal to anyone who isn't yet tired of the format. There's nothing original here, but lovers of puzzle and mapping games should find this a worthwhile purchase. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: O,U,T,E,Q left; W,R,Y,I,P right; CAPS SHIFT-SPACE jump; A,S,D,F,G enter/exit doorway; H,J,K,L,ENTER pause; CAPS SHIFT and SPACE abort game
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: pretty locations but lots of clash
Graphics: in the Wally Week style
Sound: tune at the beginning of the game
Skill levels: one
Screens: 64
General rating: A reasonable clone of a popular game format

Use of computer	**65%**
Graphics	**68%**
Playability	**65%**
Getting started	**69%**
Addictive qualities	**64%**
Value for money	**69%**
Overall	**64%**

Carrying a UB 40 and an empty cassette deck the schoolboy hero of THE HAPPIEST DAYS OF YOUR LIFE finds himself in Dolesville




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Reviews

TIME TRAX

Producer: Argus Press
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Binary Design**

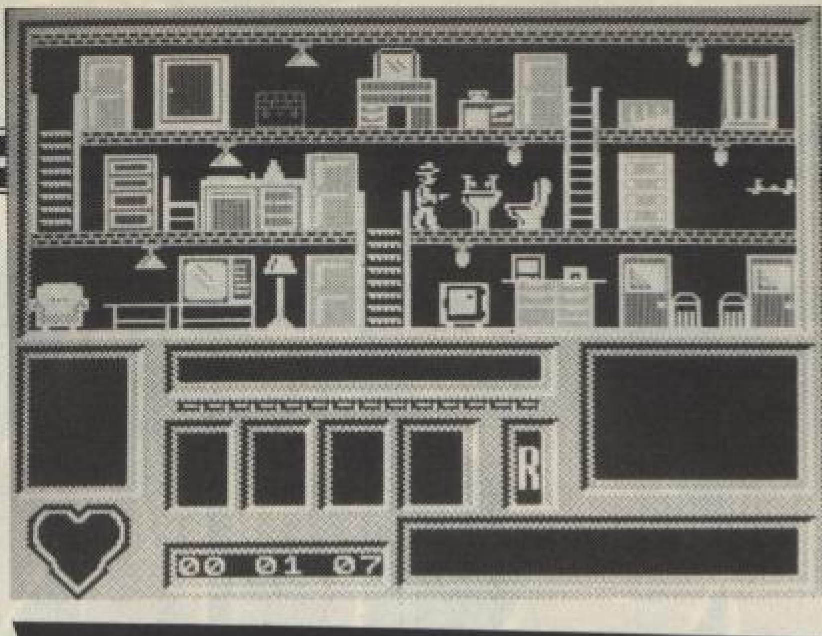
Just how do you avoid post-holocaust hassles? You seal up the portals in space and time which were ripped open when the bombs went off, that's how! To do this, though, you need to pacify the Eight Minds by returning their Character Items to them, and then seal the Portals Through Time by casting the correct spell . . .

The game starts in your living room, where you must find a weapon. So, you need to search behind the bookcases, under the setee, in the bins, and so on, until you find a gun and some ammunition. Thus equipped, you are ready to face the rigours of time travel. What this amounts to is yet more tramping around, searching everything in sight. There are many different time zones to explore, each with a distinctive graphical style.

To complete the quest you must find objects which will appease the Minds. The Minds will then feel in a generous mood and give you a rune or two. These runes must be correctly assembled in a cosmic pattern. Fortunately, scrolls can be found which give you a clue to the correct orientation of the runes, and you are also told how close you have got to the correct orientation.

You can move your character left or right and up or down ladders. You can also leap left or right, fire whatever weapon is in your possession or enter an options mode. This gives you access to a scrollng menu at the bottom of the screen which can be used to search, pick up, use or haggle with any minds you might meet.

Travelling around the three screens of a time zone is simple, you just go through various doors and openings. Getting between time zones is a little trickier — you either have to cast a spell, which uses up precious runes, or wait until a time portal shows up. These turn up at regular intervals, so like many aspects of life, it's basically a case of being in the right place at the right time . . .



Right at the beginning of TIME TRAX, the first task is to find a weapon

CRITICISM

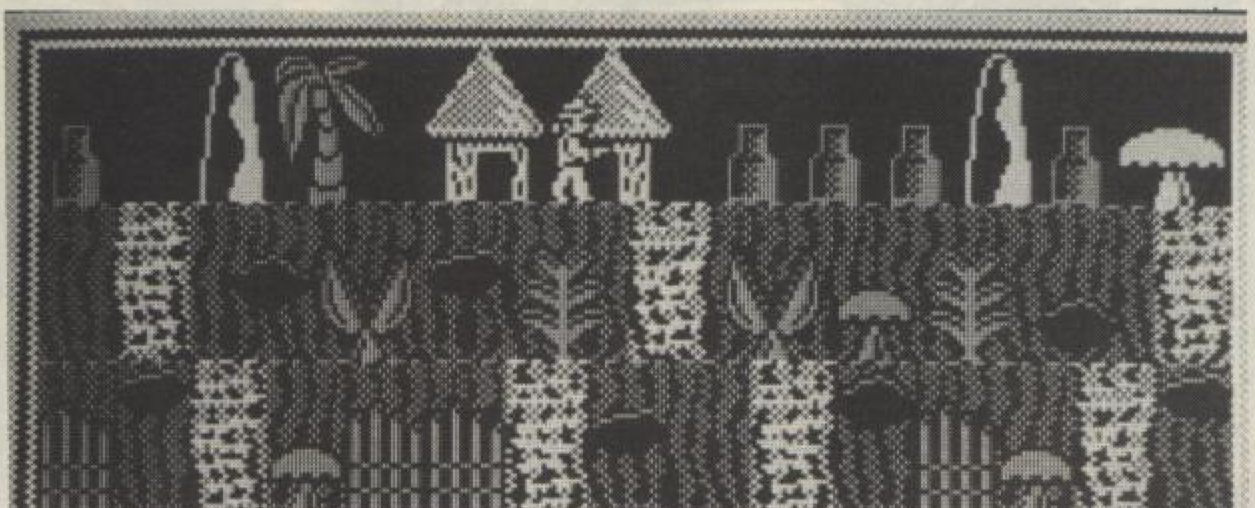
● **" The graphics in this game are varied — some screens have lots of colour and detail, while others look like a bad case of whitewashing. The animation is fine but nothing worth shouting about. One annoying feature is that although your character always carries a gun, it's useless until the bullets are found and loaded. This can result in several very short games. The bullets and just about anything else are found by detailed searching. This leads to a very slow and frustrating game, and it's this lack of pace that spoils an otherwise well executed game. There's plenty to do but none of it is all that interesting. Suffice to say that those interested in long, drawn out and difficult arcade adventures will find something to their liking. Others are less likely to be impressed. "**

● *" Time Trax is a strange game to play and until you begin to understand how the game works it can be very unrewarding. If you stick with it and learn the 'physics' of the game it can become quite playable, however. The graphics are on the small and undetailed side but they are quite adequate. There is a lot of colour on screen, so when your character walks around a fair bit of attribute clash is generated. The sound is poor: there are no tunes and the use of effects is minimal. If you like strategy games then this one may well be for you, but as there is very little in the way of arcade action I couldn't play Time Trax for too long as it got fairly monotonous. "*

● " What a strange game *Time Trax* is. At first it looks extremly complex and off-putting, but a few minutes play reveals that this is quite a simple little game to play. The graphics look very *Young Ones*-ish, and all the little characters are drawn with accuracy — but a bit too small for any decent animation. The screen layout is very smart and the options mode is extremely easy to use. I felt that the game was instantly addictive but the appeal soon wore off after a few games. The instruction book is well written and reveals all the little quirks of the game. The idea of swapping time zones was quite good, but I still wasn't too impressed with it. "



The hero wanders around a strange jungle village in TIME TRAX. Below the main playscreen, the game control console reveals that some poison is in the inventory



COMMENTS

Control keys: definable: up, down, left, right, fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: a bit sluggish
Use of colour: plentiful, at the expense of clash
Graphics: a little primitive
Sound: minimal effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 21
General rating: An interesting game with strategic elements — strategists might complain, though!

Use of computer	67%
Graphics	69%
Playability	70%
Getting started	56%
Addictive qualities	65%
Value for money	59%
Overall	**63%**

CAPTAIN KELLY

Producer: Quicksilva
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Icon Design**

Captain Kelly was a 'space hopper' — a pilot who treks from the Moon to the Earth and back, day in, day out. A new job was what he desperately needed, one with prospects and plenty of travelling. Oh, and lots of money.

Whilst browsing through the Space Gazette one day, he saw an advert: 'See the universe and make Mega Credits'. How could he resist? He didn't. He applied, and much to his surprise, Kelly was taken on immediately.

At first the job seemed ideal, simply picking up newly finished spaceships and delivering them to clients — rather shady clients at that. Unfortunately, the job began to go drastically wrong when Kelly tried to get into one of the robot controlled mining traders . . .

Usually, when a pilot inserts a credit disc it disables all security systems inside the ship. Not so this time. Unwittingly, Captain Kelly stumped inside. And it was only then did he realise to his horror that although the security system lets people inside the complex with no trouble, it just won't let them out again. At least not in one piece, anyway.

And so, Captain Kelly came to face the hardest mission of his life. Somehow, he had to reclaim control of the ship from the robots and make his delivery on time.

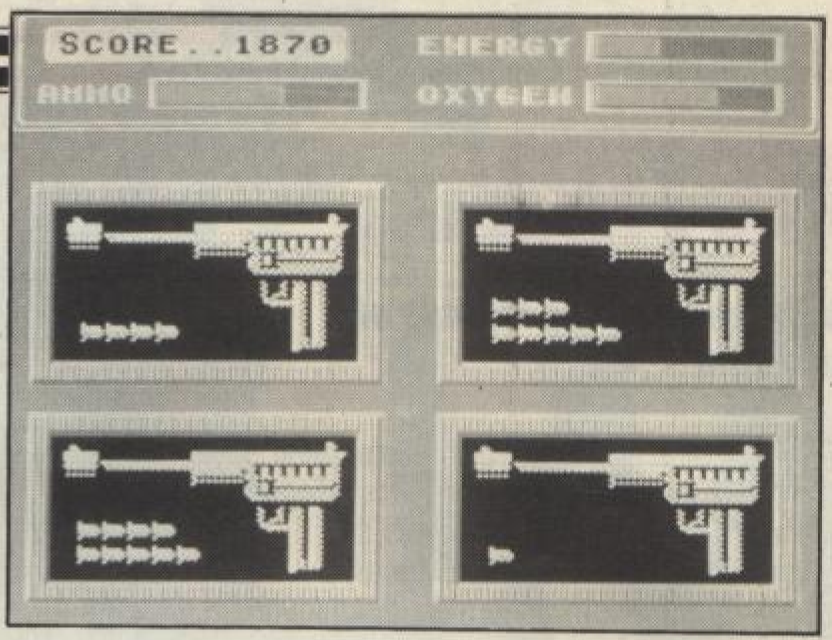
These robots are not stupid by any means. The entire ship is a robot's playground. As well as the numerous robots on each level of the ship, there are robot repair bays which re-activate droids that have been knocked out of action.

There are seven levels of the ship and five robots per level. Robots can be disabled by using a laser gun. However, Kelly has a limited amount of ammunition and each droid requires several blasts to kill. Extra ammunition can be found around the ship, but it is heavily guarded.

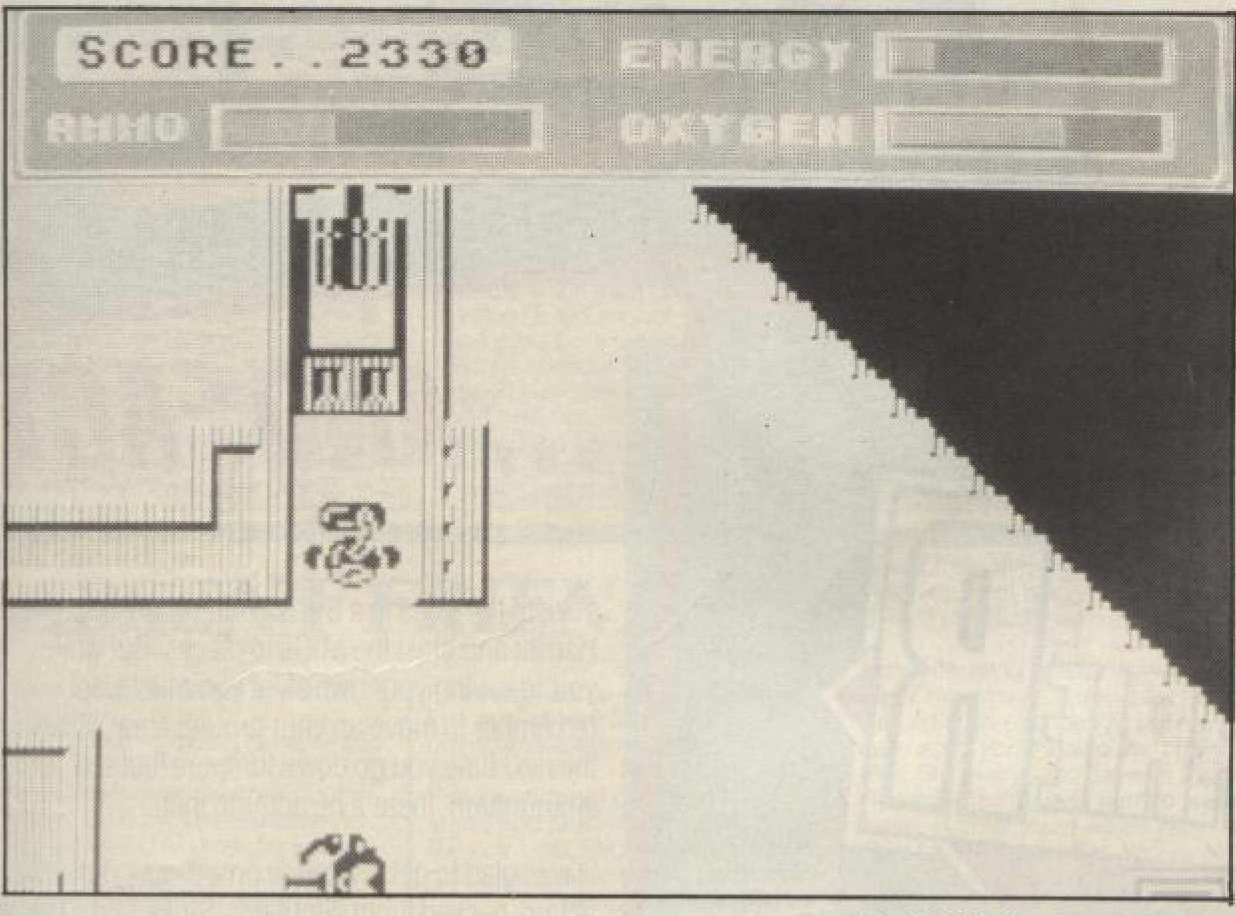
To make matters worse, Kelly has a limited amount of oxygen and energy. When either of these vital commodities runs out, his life support systems cease to function and he dies. Fortunately, energy can be replenished by entering one of the many infirmaries around the ship.

Status reports can be accessed from various points around the ship. These detail how many robots have been destroyed and how many are still intact.

Kelly moves around the ship on foot but he can use the teleports scattered around the ship to transfer him to different levels. Kelly's got a real problem on his hands . . . maybe driving to the Moon and back was a nice job after all!



The armoury sequence, in which the Captain gets a chance to restock his ammo — stop the guns as they flip past to choose one



Looking down on Captain Kelly who's in a bit of a corner — he's the little guy with the space helmet and oxygen tank on his back. There's a dirty great tank at his front, too

CRITICISM

● **" What's this, get rid of the nasty robots wandering over the several levels of your space ship. I think I've heard that one before somewhere. I honestly wonder if this game was written on QUICKSILVA's new games designer as it isn't at all professional. The graphics are on the whole quite colourful, but the playing area lacks a lot of detail and the characters are badly animated. The best thing about** Captain Kelly **is the sound track; there's a lovely tune on the title screen and the odd spot effect during play. The game is very easy to get into as it doesn't really involve any thinking, but because it is so easy it gets monotonous very quickly. On the whole** Captain Kelly **is not playable or compelling, so I wouldn't splash out any of your hard earned cash on it. "**

● *" Captain Kelly immediately reminded me of Quazatron, only viewed from above. Although I found the basic look of the game very pleasant and appealing, I found it very boring and hard to get into. The sound effects are extremely good and the title screen features a very good two-channel tune. The game features some reasonably fast scrolling, but the movement of the characters is very slow. The scenario on the inlay is very well written and the way the instructions are laid out is very good, giving you a quick idea of what the game is all about.* Captain Kelly *has excellent presentation — it's just boring to play. "*

● " This is a rather dull little shoot 'em up. Nothing much to recommend: it's much the same as any other blast away game. There are a few nice bits of tactics, like getting the robots to shoot each other, but essentially it's just a matter of blazing away. The infirmary is rather silly, pounding away on the keyboard decathalon style to get the guy to rotate in order to restore energy. But don't get too good — if your energy goes over 100 per cent, the game crashes! "

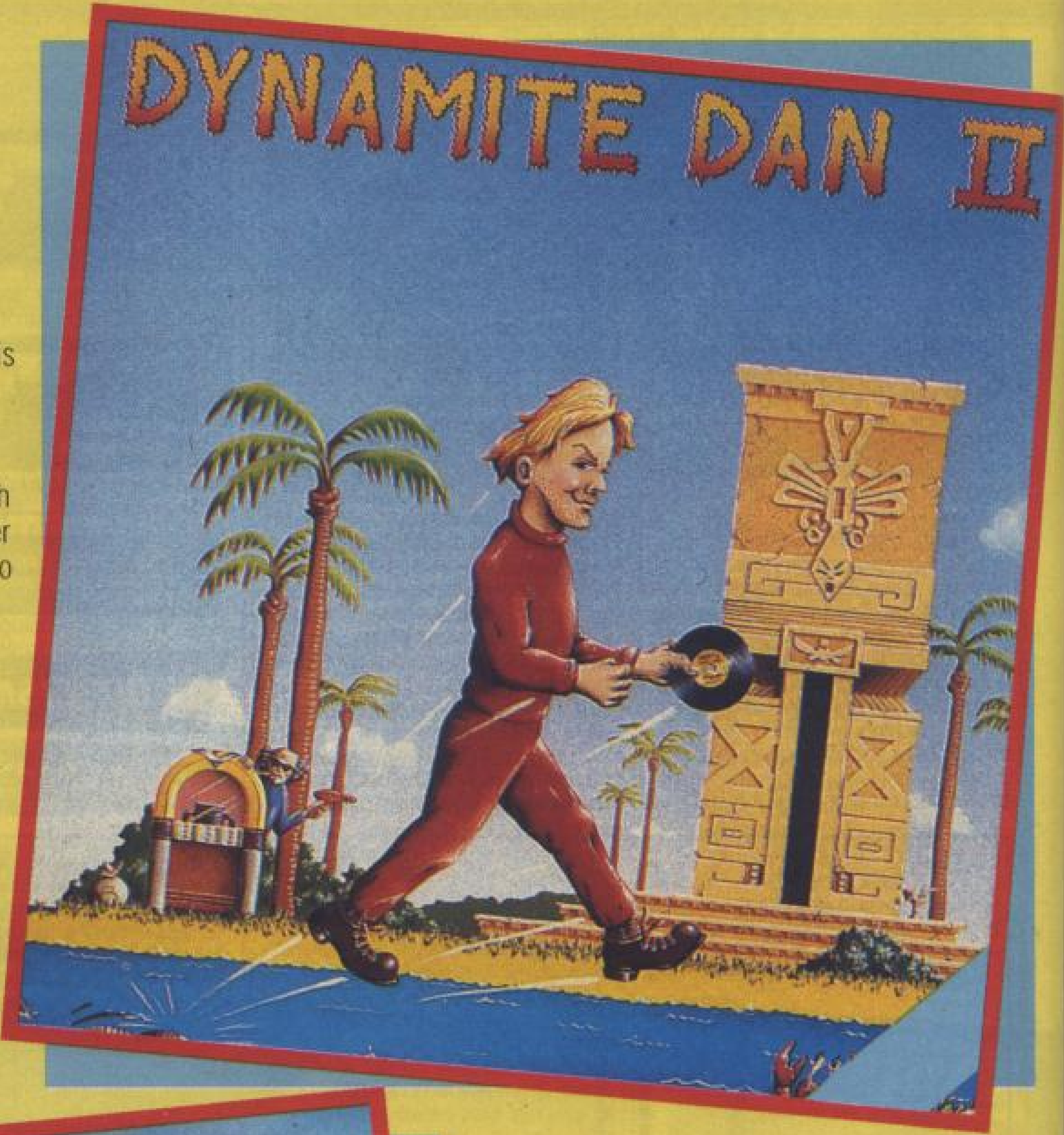
COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: adequate
Use of colour: pale effect overall
Graphics: two dimensional flat view
Sound: funky little tune at the beginning and spot effects throughout
Skill levels: seven
Screens: scrolling play area
General rating: Nothing remarkable here . . .

Use of computer	76%
Graphics	75%
Playability	65%
Getting started	79%
Addictive qualities	62%
Value for money	57%
Overall	**63%**

MIRRORSOFT

FICTION . . .



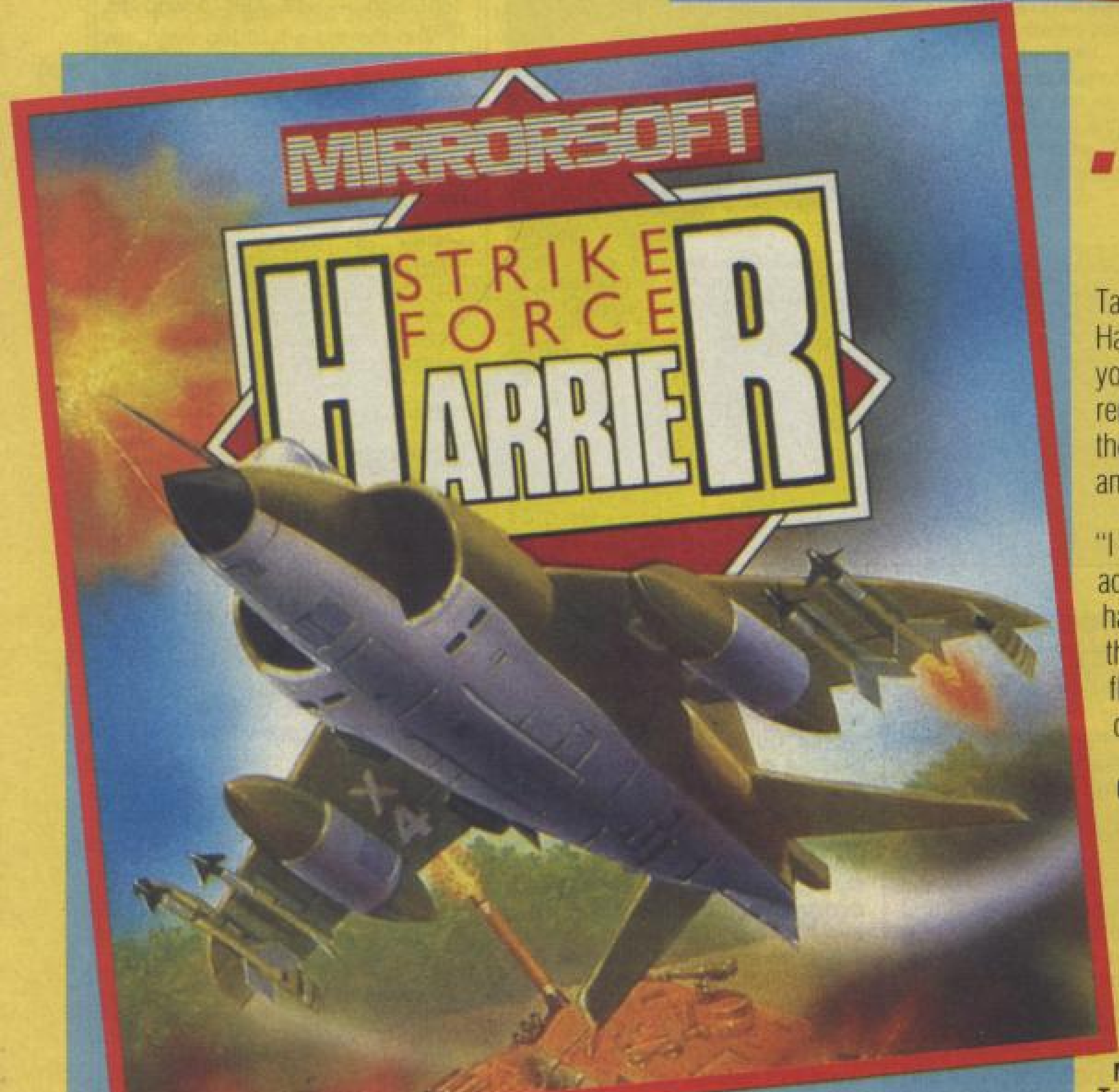
Dr Blitzen and the Islands of Arcanum

Dr Blitzen's latest ploy to gain global domination is to brainwash the youth of the world by including subliminal sound waves in pop records, so Dynamite Dan has been recalled to divert the dastardly doctor once more. He must hunt through all eight islands at Arcanum, picking up the master disc from each, and piece together the password to destroy the pressing plant.

"Very playable and addictive, I strongly recommend it to everyone . . . A great game . . . superb value for money" **Crash**

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LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM



Life is hotting up as it usually does at this time of year. You may think it poor that Christmas begins in mid-October these days, when all the pretty, pretty Chrissy trees go up on the store-fronts, but at CRASH Towers, Christmas began in June with the first discussions of what would go in the Christmas Special issue and, more importantly, how the team would cope with all the strain! Now it's really getting near, frightening isn't it?

Lots of fine letters this month, bash and counter bash, and counter-counter bash. For the £20 worth of software for letter of the month, I chose this one from a parent for a change . . .

CHANGES, CHANGES

Dear Lloyd,
When I started the software was amazingly simple, like being a king and having to feed the peasants for seven years to complete the game, yet it was fun and pretty tricky stuff. Now my boys can come home with games that are truly amazing. I can use machine code to a fair degree yet still find the games absolutely fantastic. How do they do it? Surely the software capabilities of the machine have surpassed what Sir Clive originally intended for his baby?

I noted a letter in your September issue from Brian Gillespie saying he felt a lot of innocence had gone from the software market. Oh how true! I remember reading articles about games authors who with one disk drive wrote really good stuff in their back rooms. It was a fun time then and one felt just maybe you could achieve this yourself. Of course now games are written by teams of people each working on a separate slice. It is a shame but in your magazine you hear so many complaints about the quality of software that the houses had to become more professional. You can't have it both ways!

As for advertising, if you spend large amounts of money in creating a game then you've got to sell a lot of copies. We know this large colourful advertising works from the letters you get from people who rush out to buy a game on the strength of an advert even before it is released. Also regarding advertising, your cover price would be astronomical if it wasn't for the large adverts you carry. I used to sell space and know all about the discount jungle, so just tell them to stick it 'cause you're No1 for Spectrum games players, so my boys tell me, all their friends read CRASH or ZZAP! depending on 'religion'.

Finally, we must all face facts, the Spectrum is not the best home computer you can get even for the money, but we're loyal. Right guys? If it hadn't been for Sir Clive we'd all be playing paddle tennis instead of *Ghosts n Goblins*. *Power to your elbow Lloyd, I'm sure we'll be reading CRASH for many years to come.*
Paul Tyler, Mitcham, Surrey

That's the kind of thing I like to hear! How could any machine in such a fast moving market remain the best value around for ever? Yet the Spectrum has continued to keep pace with all the others simply because it allowed such flexibility in programming from the outset, that programmers have always managed to better themselves year after year. And long may it continue. Thank you for your comments, Paul, your software choice should be on its way soon.
LM

ABSENT FRIENDS

Dear Lloyd (What's a camera?) Mangram,
I've got a mighty big bone to pick with you. WHY, WHY, WHY, weren't Hannah Smith, Roger Kean, Oli Frey, Del Brewster, etc, etc at the PCW show on Friday? Eh? You just tell me that! All the people I saw that were on the Newsfield stand were Sean Masterson, some bloke called Kavenagh and a woman called Frances as well as other unknowns. Even Penn and Rignall would've done. I felt so annoyed that I wandered over to the EMAP stand and stuck C&VG and Sinclair User Stickers ALL OVER my CRASH sweatshirt. So there!
Yours, Mathew Clarke
PS I'm still your friend
PPS Tell Hannah Smith she's sexier than Melissa Ravenflame. The picture of her on the cover of CRASH 31 really turned me on!

Derek certainly wasn't at the show, and Oliver made it down for the Saturday and Sunday as did Hannah, sorry you missed her on Friday. But everyone else was there, Roger definitely was and so were Penn, Rignall, Aunt Aggie (aka Carol Kinsey) and Ben Stone. Not only is Hannah sexier than Ms Ravenflame, she's somehow much more . . . REAL
LM

UNRELIABLE

Dear Lloyd,
Having read your PCW show preview in the October issue of CRASH there were two items that persuaded me to venture up to Olympia on Friday 5th September of this year. They were the release of ELITE's much awaited *Paperboy* and this special offer of DOMARK's *Trivial Pursuit*. On arriving at ''the event of the year in the games world'' as you described it, I was told by DOMARK's representative that all copies of the above mentioned *Trivial Pursuit* were on sale for £10 and I discovered that ELITE now plan on releasing *Paperboy* later this month.

Being a student, it was no mean feat scrounging up the £7 train fare and the £3 entrance fee (including programme).

In the past, I have never had any complaints to make about CRASH, in fact it has been the best Spectrum publication by far for a long time, but after this total lack of reliability, I am no longer so sure. I hope you can restore my faith in the next few issues.
IM Orford, Billericay, Essex

I hope we can too, but information given in advance of any event is taken on its face value, and a month (between publishing and the event) is a long time. Time enough for people to alter their plans.
LM

OOPS!

Dear Lloyd,
We are one of the retailers featured in the READER INFORMATION SERVICE DIRECTORY in September's CRASH and are grateful for your free service, but would like to point out to your readers that our telephone number is in fact, **CORSHAM (0249) 712653** and not as published.

I hope this will help those who have tried to reach us without success. Thank you once again for your help and support.
Yours sincerely,
G Randall. SOFTWARE MANAGER, Gerard's Software, Corsham

Sorry Mr Randall, obviously a typesetting slip up in some department or other! I hope that puts the matter right (but has anyone from editorial passed the information on to whatever department it is made the slip up)?
LM



A LITTLE COMPUTER PERSON

Dear Lloyd,
Ha, so you've all been wondering where old Robin is then. Well I am the proud owner of one Robin Candy. I bought him at a market in Milton Keynes from this little old woman on a stall selling CRASH backnumbers (now you know why they are running out). He was so mega cheap I just couldn't refuse, a real Candy cage and adoption papers free, yes free!

I'm sure this woman said, 'bye,son,' as I led him away tugging at his chain. I suppose his grunts meant roughly, 'mother, don't sell me, well not this cheaply anyway.'

He's not been the same recently since his supply of CRASH coffee (or is it soup) ran out, I just had to feed him on Hannah's playing tips instead (sorry Hannah) he seemed to enjoy ripping them to pieces.

I will let Candy free for such a small price I feel I'm ripping myself off, all you have to do is make my letter Star Letter. Maybe that should be the other way round, I'll let Candy loose if you don't make this the Star Letter (sorry to have to make threats against you but I'm in bad need of some new software). Just think, such a small price to pay to be sure of never having Candy soil the threshold of the world famous (nearly) CRASH Towers.

Batman and Robin, Brickhill, Bedford

Okay Robin, stop writing these 'keep my name on the pages' letters or there'll be trouble. You can't fool me with a fake Bedford post stamp . . .
LM

THREE POINT TURN

Dear Mangram-thing,
I've got a lot to get through so I'll start immediately.

1. ADS. I must agree with Michael Imprato (issue 32). Many (but not all) advertisements consist of a whole page, devoted to the game's title — *Revenge of the Inland Revenue*, and a drawing of said leering taxman brandishing his 3 foot long poisoned rollerball — nothing else. No helpful screen shots, no caption explaining what you must do in the game, whether it's an adventure or an arcade game, and sometimes not even a price! This means you know more about how a good artist is than how good a game is.

2. MINSON. Why doesn't this moron push off and do monthly recipes in WOMAN magazine. We want to know about latest launches not latest lunches. His page can, on occasion be amusing, but let's have a bit more relevance, huh?

3. I am forced to complain about the utterly unreasonable way the comps minion is treated. (cue violins). This poor, defenceless wretch seems beset by every sort of torture and humiliation you evil lot can devise. Shame! Anyway, this has got to stop. I hereby announce the formation of S.P.U.T.U.M. — Society for the Protection of Underprivilged and Totally Unappreciated Minions. This gratuitous violence will cease immediately — or there'll be trouble.

Connor Carson, Donaghadee, Co Down
PS Go get her Hannah!

Yes, some ads are a bit minimal in concept, on the other hand, they might well become a bit tedious to look at if they get too technical and informative. Still, there's obviously a balance to be found. Minson irrelevant!? He's the epitome of relevancy, a fearless writer who tells it like it is. You think the games business is all fun, all playing games all day. Well let me tell you it's not. There's a lot of hard drinking, loud shouting and unquiet Hawaiian shirts to get through before your average computer hack can drop into his unmade bed. Same goes for comps minions (or is that 'comps minsions')?
LM

MINSON FAN

Dear Lloyd,
Just a quick few words to tell the critics in the mould of Philip Coggins and Mr Evans to leave Mr Minson alone! Just imagine how dull the page would be if he gave an everyday account of his travels, for example: "And then I went to MIKRO-GEN's offices, saw a game in the pipeline called *The All-new Wally Week Game*, had lunch went back to CRASH Towers. . . ." See how boring it could be? Some spice is needed, no matter what. So keep up the good work Mr Minson (and CRASH)!

P Hindle, Lancing, Sussex

PS Tell Mr Minson that I found a half eaten Barrat Sherbet Fountain the other day in Tesco's freezer. He is welcome to it!

I guess that would sound dull. Even duller would be nothing on the page at all. That would be cheaper though — perhaps I should suggest this upwards in the hope that the Minson fee comes downward in my direction, which would be a help what with the new Sutton's seed catalogue out and an early planting start to make after the Yuletide festivities . . .
LM

DOUBLY CROSSED

Dear Lloyd,
In reply to Amstrad's launching of the new Spectrum I would just like to say I am a bit angry. I bought my Spectrum Plus ten months ago. Within a year of buying my computer, two other Spectrums have been launched, each one better than the other. I would just like to say two things:
1. When is this going to stop and
2. Can I get my Spectrum upgraded by Amstrad?

Thomas Greenan, Castlepark, Irvine

Annoying, isn't it. But exactly the same thing happened to Amstrad owners. Amstrad seem hell bent on producing new machines, some compatible and some not, at a furious pace without much care for the consumer who buys early. In answer; I've no idea whether it's going to stop, but I doubt it, and I would be surprised if Amstrad upgraded your machine for you.
LM

THE JERRY ROSS BACKLASH

Dear CRASH,
I really think all these arguments about violence and sexual over tones have gone to Oli's head. I mean look at his drawing of Hannah Smith mud wrestling with Melissa Paving Slab it looked nothing like her, and if this C&VG (eek) tipster is all woman why does she sign her name Jerry Ross?

Yours Domark Fraggle, New England, Peterborough

Good point, why does she?
LM

REVAMPING THE QL?

Dear Lloyd,
I am about to exagerate a little but if you think about what I am about to say it is quite possible. The Spectrum 128K flopped as it was not devastatingly different to other computers so no-one wanted to fork out the money before there was any software. In my opinion the next big selling computer will have to knock socks off the Spectrum and Commodore 64 for the same price tag. How, I here you say, can this be done? I'm not intending that what I'm about to say should be done but it is to prove it is possible.

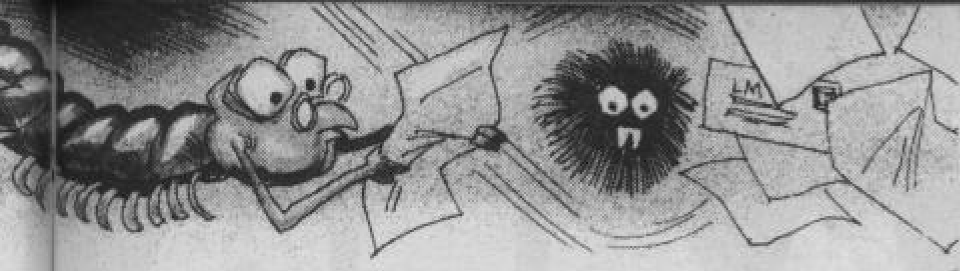
The late great QL is one hell of a piece of hardware underneath its bad publicity. It failed the business market as people thought it was too cheap to be good and it failed the games market as few kids have £400 knocking about. If you put a three channel sound chip into a QL what have you got? A games computer with 128K memory, twice as good graphics as a Spectrum, 8 colours per square, 3 channel sound. In plain English a computer capable of producing games which would out do the best games or any of the big selling games machines at the moment.

The present price of a QL is £160 and that includes a printer from all Dixon stores. The Spectrum 128K costs £139 now and is far inferior to such a computer. Now then: you may say: People don't want a computer that's not compatible with a Spectrum. This isn't true. Most people who bought a 128K Spectrum kept their old Spectrum as everyone who wants a computer has already got one and there is nobody to sell it to.

I personally would keep my Spectrum no matter whether I bought a new computer which was absolutely 100% compatible with it. Second hand Spectrums are not in demand and if by chance you could sell it you would only get £20 or so for it. To have it as a spare is worth more than that. So a new computer need not be compatible to be able to sell well.

Paul Fravigar, Skegness, Lincs

Now there's an original thought. Perhaps the QL could see a new lease of life after all! Of course it uses a 68,000 processor, which to some degree puts it in with the Atari ST and Mac. Maybe a new mag catering for those machines would also help boost the QL — who knows . . . ?
LM



KEEP IT LIKE IT IS!

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing to comment on complaints suggesting that the 'Fear and Loathing' articles are too adult and boring, and CRASH Course is useless as the average CRASH reader is a teenager.

If CRASH catered only for the average reader, look what would have happened to last month's issue:

The average reader is a games player, so out would go Tech-Niche, CRASH Course, The Gallery and Fear and Loathing.

The average game-player plays arcade games, so it would be goodbye to Adventure Trail, Sign Stumps, Front-Line, PBM Mailbox, the adventure Charts and the *Stretching Computer Games* feature.

So what are we left with?

The Editorial, News, Forum, Hotline charts, the Hall of Slime, Playing Tips, Merely Mangram and the Lunar Jetman Cartoon.

That may look quite a lot, but it is only 68 readable pages, compared with 82 pages now!! (This doesn't include adverts).

What a waste of time CRASH would be if those whining simps had their way. I like CRASH just as it is, Thanks.

Nat Pryce, Redland, Bristol

Right! And (by your calculations) 14 pages against 68 doesn't eat up too much of the mainstream stuff either, does it? Life has more to offer than the obvious, and you should seize it when it's there. Thank you, Nat, for a dollop of common sense.
LM



DIDDLED

Dear Lloyd,
I felt I must write to you after reading your letters page, especially Lee Sayers' letter. I also bought my 128K within months of it being launched, and frankly I feel diddled. We were promised lots of new releases for the new computer but to date all I have seen are a few revamped programs that have had made adequate use of the 128's excellent sound chip, and only a few have been expanded to make use of the vast amount of memory. Why oh why aren't any of the software houses being brave and writing games for the 128?

My other gripe is that on the subject of the OPUS *Discovery* system. I feel that software companies haven't really taken advantage of this excellent system. Games such as *Elite* could have made a real use from the Disk System. The game could have been expanded with many more by having the flying and docking loading separately. On this subject may I say thanks to SOFTWARE PROJECTS for putting *Dragons Lair* on disk: even as I write this letter my tape and four pounds are winging their way to SOFTWARE PROJECTS in exchange for a disk version of their game. So come on all of you software companies put your games on disks, I would be quite happy to splash out the extra money for advanced speed. This would save me a lot of time in transferring all my games to my OPUS system as well.

Robert Bain, Blandford, Dorset

It is indeed a shame that the Opus Disk drive has not been pushed more, since with more exposure and software for it, more Spectrum owners may have opted for purchasing it. This kind of feedback effect always has enormous benefits for everyone in the long run.
LM

NO LAUGHING MATTER

Dear Lloyd,
In the October CRASH your Competition Minion made a mistake. In the *WAR* wordsquare you have LAUGH written down as a word to find, but it cannot be found in the square. The nearest word to it is DAUGH on the end of HEAD.

Phineas Huggett, Eastbourne, Sussex

It's simply a matter of the Comps Minion having the last laugh, huh? Never mind Phineas, like everyone else you were stuck with the same wordsquare, so it didn't make the competition any worse for you.
LM

SUZUKI

48/128K SPECTRUM

TT RACER

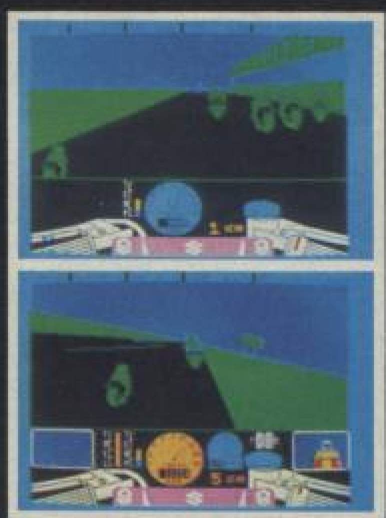


BY R.J. SWIFT

TT Racer is a spectacular motor cycle racing simulation that puts you on the hot seat of a Grand Prix bike. Experience the unique thrill of racing with its stunning over-the-handlebars 3D view and state of the art solid graphics. Set-up your bike and practice hard on the 12 famous tracks, until you're ready for the challenge... To race against the other cool professional riders for the winning flag and the world championship.

Even the top Suzuki riders like Paul Lewis and Kevin Schwantz have been amazed at the accuracy of the tracks and the authentic feel of the bike.

- **Spectacular over-the-handlebars 3D display**
- **All 12 Grand Prix tracks**
- **All 4 solo Grand Prix classes**
- **Challenge the computer and race against 15 other bikes or with networking 7 of your friends**
- **4 different levels of competition**
- **Full Grand Prix season points scoring**





128 SLAMMED

Dear Lloyd,
Since (as you so correctly pointed out) there will no doubt be a massive uproar about N Potter's letter (Forum 32), I thought I'd be different and defend him.

I'll start with the standard 48K Spectrum. In its day, this was a very good machine, but its day has long gone (it was already fading when the Plus was introduced). Yes, the programmers still do amazing things with it, but what right does that give anyone to condemn someone who speaks the truth and admits the Spectrum is outdated. True, the C64 is also based on outdated technology, but it is better implemented — its faults, bad BASIC and the need to use a dedicated tape deck are curable, attribute clash and terrible sound are not (yes there are add-on sound boxes but who supports them)?

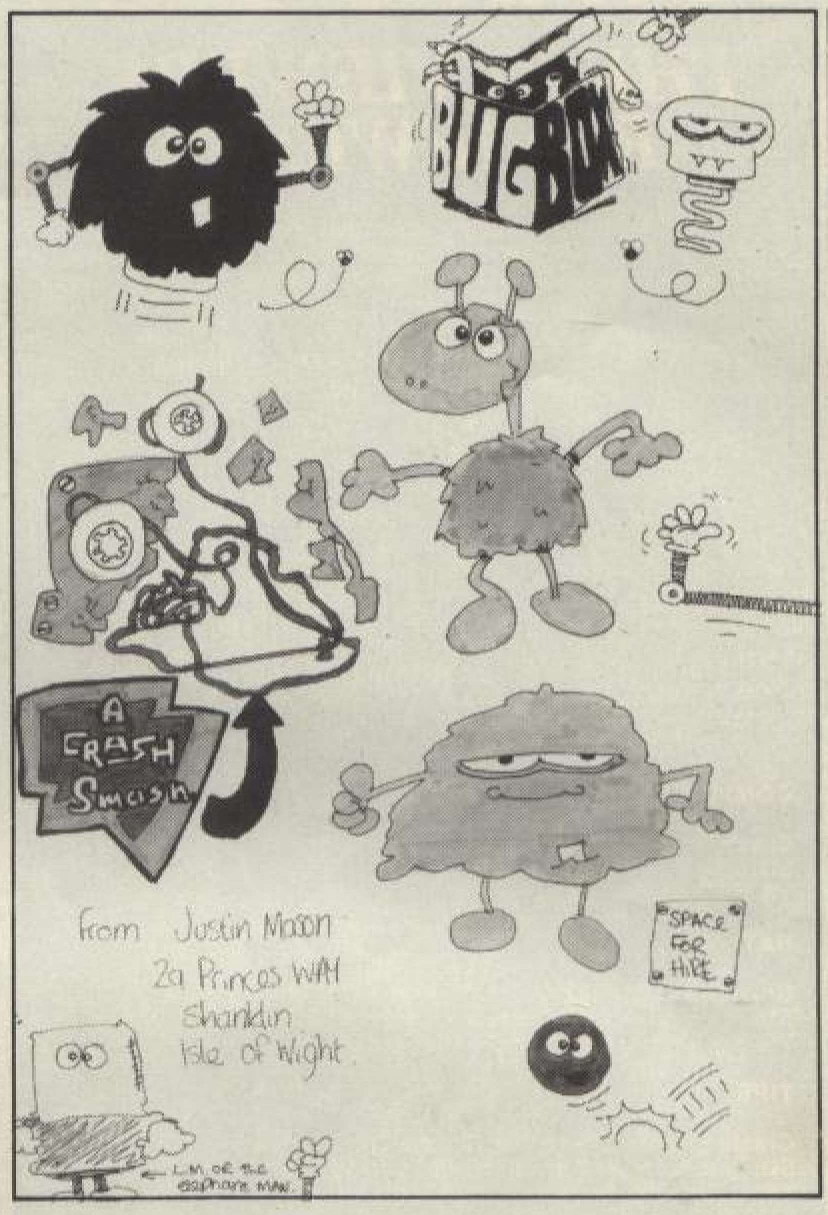
On to the much talked about (but little bought) Spectrum 128K. This machine is a joke! What's it got over the 48K? More memory — fair enough — I concede on this point. Better sound — hah! If the Spectrum is outdated, the AY chip is positively prehistoric! It doesn't have proper envelope control — just a few preset shapes. Compare this to the SID chip used in the C64 — on the other hand, don't — there is no comparison. The best way to do this is to visit your local computer and get them to put a game on both the Amstrad (which uses the AY chip) and the C64. Listen to the difference — I rest my case. As to how Sinclair has written the ROM sound routine — that's the best of all. The whole point of having a sound chip is to take the load off the CPU so it can get on while the note is sounded. So what does Uncle Clive do — he makes it so the computer stops while it plays a note — brilliant!!

To cap it all, Uncle C missed his final chance to use a proper keyboard. I'm sorry, I couldn't recommend the 128 to anyone.

Personally, when I get rid of my Spectrum at the end of the year, I'll be buying a C128D. These may not come cheap, but you do get 3 computers for your money. Games — use 64 mode. Programming — 128 mode has one of the best BASICs available. Serious programs — depends on your wallet size — most Spectrum utilities are also out on the 64 — there quite a few American 128 utilities — for the rich, just switch on CP/M mode . . .

However, I will stay loyal to CRASH, I've got quite attached to it and could never get into ZZAP!
PA Rasbotham, Garswood, Wigan, Lancs

I'm not surprised, such an unpleasant bunch those ZZAP! people! Your opinions are obviously strong on the 128, and I'm not saying they're unfounded either. But whether the plus and 48K have really had their day is another matter. What counts, surely, is the quality of software available. Compare it with a book. Do you decide that just because books have been around a long while (regardless of what's written on the page) it's time to throw them away. It is the book that matters, it's the novel contained on its pages that counts.
LM



VALIANT DEFENDER

Dear Lloyd,
Having owned my Spectrum for 3 years, I have watched the software industry grow from strength to strength with releases such as *JSW/Manic Miner, Sabre Wulf, Underwurlde, Knight Lore* and the more recent *Way of the Exploding Fist*. All of these releases were original, excellent games, outshining all other games on the market, and are well remembered for doing so.

It seems, however, that breakthroughs like this are nearing extinction and we have to be content with either sequels (*Dynamite Dan II, Cauldron II*), copies of earlier hits (*Batman, Bobby Bearing*) or arcade conversions (*Ping Pong, Ghosts n Goblins*).

Exasperated Spectrum owners seem to have blamed ULTIMATE for this, lord knows why, they are the only company that I can think of that have been awarded a CRASH Smash on each and every release.

Having valiantly defended the Spectrum for so long against those horrible C64 owners, I will continue to do so, in hope that the recent software slump will pick up after the PCW show in time to fill my Christmas stocking with some good original stuff.
Anne (yes, a girl) Poulton, Wokingham, Berkshire

Perhaps we're all being a bit impatient. It took a couple of years before the real clever breakthroughs started to happen on the software scene. Since then they have come thick and fast enough, yet if you look back, everything takes its own time. I'm convinced there's still a lot more to happen yet.
LM

FIRE FIGHTING

Dear LM,
Could you please ask Hannah Smith when she is going to publish the second half of *The Incredible Shrinking Fireman* solution. The first part was published in Issue 29 (June 86). I'd be most grateful.

Also, could you print my Address because I would like a Pen Pal that has a 48k Spectrum. I am 14 years of age and I have wanted a pen pal for quite a long time.
David Thompson, 21 Winchcombe Road, Alcester, Warwickshire. B49 6QL

Hannah tells me she thinks she already has printed it, but perhaps she's become confused by all the recent raving fame. Still, there's a map this month and hopefully the solution (again?) next month.
LM

HIDDEN LEVELS

Dear Lloyd,
Did you realise that CRASH is read by the third best group in the world? (The first and second are not WHAM!) Yes, LEVEL 42 read CRASH! Now listen up, and I'll start from the beginning.

A while back I purchased a copy of LEVEL 42's latest album entitled *World Machine*. It wasn't until now that I noticed this part of the lyric in a song called *Dream Crazy*:

''Stand easy, it's a party CRASH so sleezy lets make a SMASH. Cool covers, set the scene, dive into the neon LOVE MACHINE''

Take a look at those lyrics.....notice anything? take a look below.

1. The first part mentions the name of your ULTRA-FANTASTICO magazine.
2. The second bit mentions the word Smash which I'm sure my fellow readers are familiar with.
3. The third section mentions 'cool covers', can they be referring to Oli Frey?
4. The last bit has got something about a 'neon love machine', this thing is probably a Spectrum.

Now lets translate the song:
''Don't panic CRASH are gonna give us a review in a party Xmas special, Let's make it good and they might give us a Smash, If they draw us on the cover it'll be great, So dive into my cupboard and pass me that Spectrum'.
Chris Willis, London NI6

Seems to be an irrefutable analysis of the lyrics to me, Chris. Hello Level 42, howre'you doing?
LM



THE REVIEWERS REVIEWED!

Dear Lloyd,
In Issue 33, Thomas Connolly and Andrew Thorpe were criticising Sinclair User, Your Sinclair etc. I have drawn up a little benchtestette (look that one up in LMLWD!) for CRASH, SU and YS.

These tests are for the October issues of the mags.

	CRASH	SU	YS
Pages:	138	115	104
Reviews:	36	27	31
Comps:	4	2	2
Colour pages:	83	53	47
Adverts:	46	49	51
Pages of letters:	6	2	3
Pages of tips:	9	2	Free tips special
Number of Tips:	18	5	Free tips special
Average review space:	page	half	half
Screenshots:	89	76	60

COMMENTS

Crash: long reviews, descriptive.
SU: longish reviews, quite basic.
YS: Shortish reviews, full of wit.

RATINGS

Crash: includes criticisms, game keys and 15 other rating factors.
SU: includes hintstrips, facts box. Uses very ancient 'stars' system.
YS: has 4 rating factors and a mark out of ten.

TIPS

Crash: Excellent, more than SU and YS. Good variety.
SU: Bad, normally 2 month old tips copied from Crash.
YS: Quite good, few screenshots, postermap every month.

OVERALL

Crash: Great mag. Original and full of colour. Lots of clear reviews. There is something for everyone in CRASH!, lots of features, I mean variety is the spice of CRASH!
SU: Quite nice. Used to be rubbish but copied CRASH with coloured, large reviews.
YS: Good. Emphasis on different printfaces. Nice and witty and colourful. Lots of 'useless wit' which does nothing for you but makes you laugh!

Well there it is. You have the evidence. Please print this, if only to serve as a guideline for any prospective buyer of magazines.
Paul Bell, Lanchester, CO Durham

Thank you for the hard work, Paul. You've saved our statistics department hours of labour!
LM

CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

Dear Mr Mangram,
We, in Portugal, usually can find a pirated copy of a new release at about the same time it's launched in England. While this may seem strange to you, that's about all we get; I've never seen an original game cassette for sale in a shop. A pirated copy of any game costs a quid, give and take 50p, and if you play honest and write a British software house you get your money back (sometimes) with a letter apologizing, but "we don't sell software to Portugal due to the piracy over there". Who's to blame, then?
Joao Paulo F A Carvalho, Loures, Portugal

Indeed, who is to blame? Frankly, if civilised countries can't act in a decent and proper manner, then there's no reason why any software house should either bother with them or the citizens within their borders.
LM

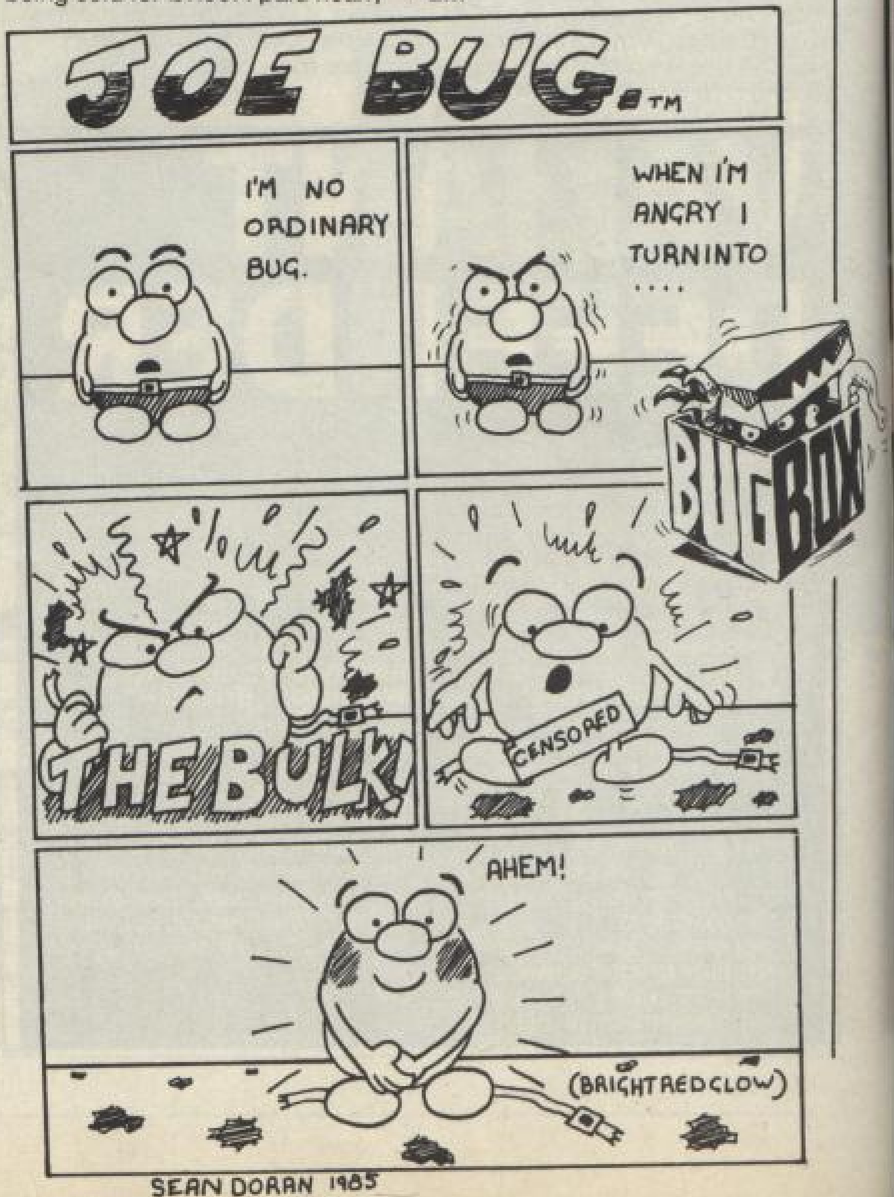
THE FINAL WORD

Dear Lloyd,
I have been an avid reader of CRASH since Issue 2, (unfortunately, I missed No 1) and thoroughly enjoy most of it! I never used to read Forum until a month or so ago and this month I'm glad I did.
I saw a letter from US GOLD referring to *World Cup Carnival*. I must admit I was amused to read their excuses for releasing an old game with a new title.
Being a married man with a young son, I don't often find the cash to buy new software, so, as you can appreciate I tend to be fairly choosy when I buy new games. My biggest passion is Sport. I play football at the weekends and most of the games I buy are Sports simulation — *Football Manager, Matchday* and *Matchpoint*, being my favourites.
When I saw *World Cup Carnival* I thought that this could be a good game to add to my collection. Unfortunately, I became too impatient and bought the game. Impatient?? Yes! — I'll explain: Usually, I wait until a game is reviewed in CRASH before deciding to buy, but as it hadn't been reviewed at the time I had enough money to buy it, I broke my own rule and took the plunge.
Boy, was I disappointed! Apart from the fancy wrapping and free badge etc, it was practically an identical copy of ARTIC's *World Cup*, (a game I bought quite a while ago for about £5 which is now being sold for £1.99. I paid nearly £10 for the US GOLD copy)!
With reference to US GOLD's well written letter; there are a number of personal observations I'd like to make.

1. I don't read ZZAP! 64 so I didn't see any screen shots.
2. No-one told me at Boots (Aldershot) where I bought *Carnival that it was an 'updated' version of the ARTIC game.*
3. *I wrote a letter to US GOLD saying that having been pleased with some of their games, I was disgusted that they passed off this game as their own! — They didn't even have the decency to reply! (so much for answering all letters).*

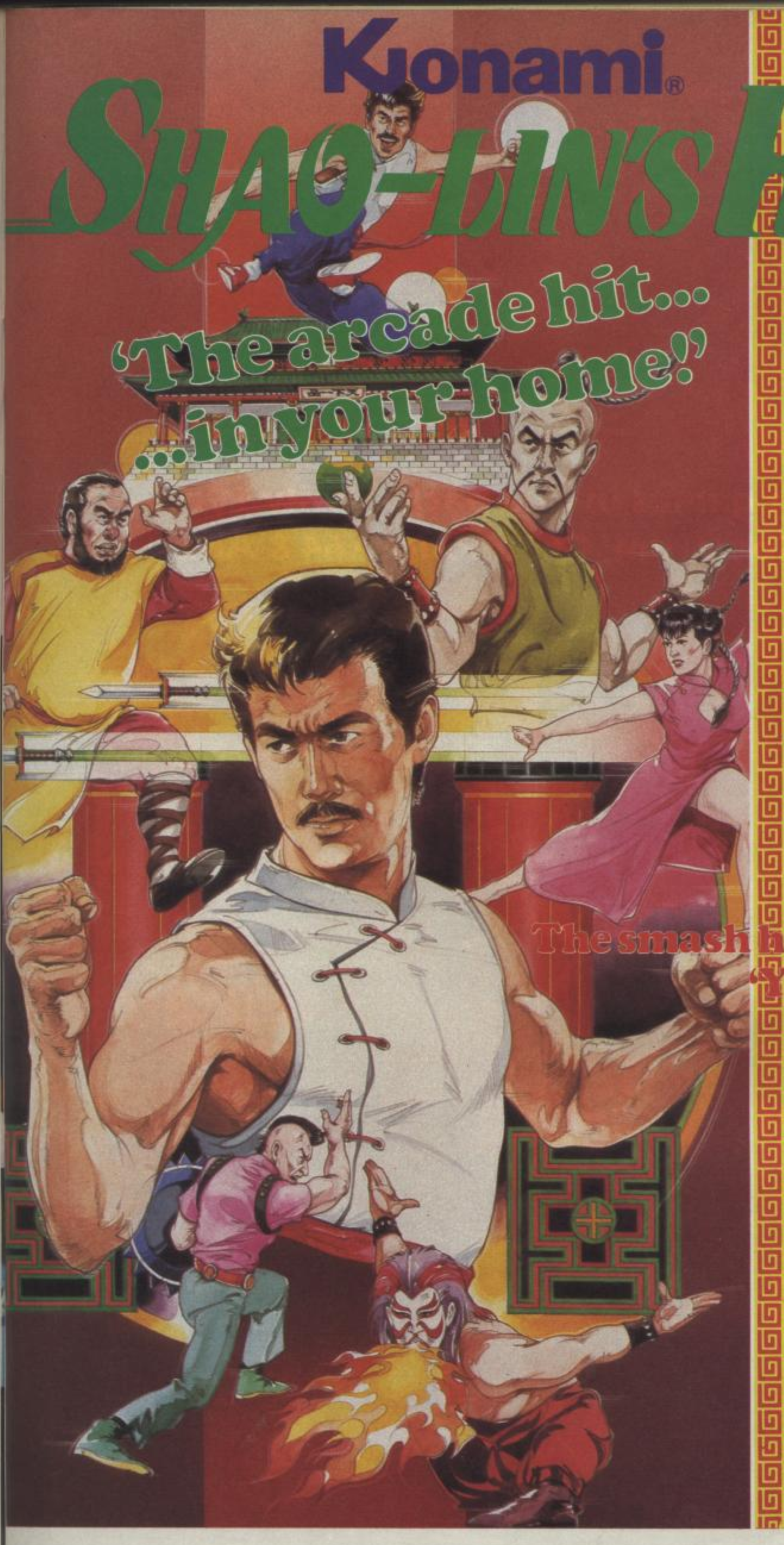
To say that Carnival was 'to the good of the software market' is in my mind, pure rubbish!
I hope you publish this letter so it may encourage other people who have lost a hard-earned £10 on a game that will never be played to add their voices to the protest.
Perhaps software companies who make a good living out of us 'punters' will start repaying us by not ripping us off.
John Miles, Aldershot, Hants

I think your letter makes its own points very succinctly without me adding anything. I'm sure the US Gold reply printed in Forum was well meant in as much as it did admit to original plans going awry, but that's hardly any consolation to those who feel they were taken in.
LM



Konami®

SHAO-LIN'S ROAD™







Screen shots from arcade version – home micro versions may differ.

The smash hit follow up to 'Yie Ar Kung-Fu'

Spectrum
Commodore 64
and
Amstrad versions
coming soon.

Our hero has finally mastered the secret martial art "CHIN'S SHAO-LIN" but is trapped by triad gangs. With kicks and other secret powers, escape from and travel SHAO-LIN'S road to freedom!

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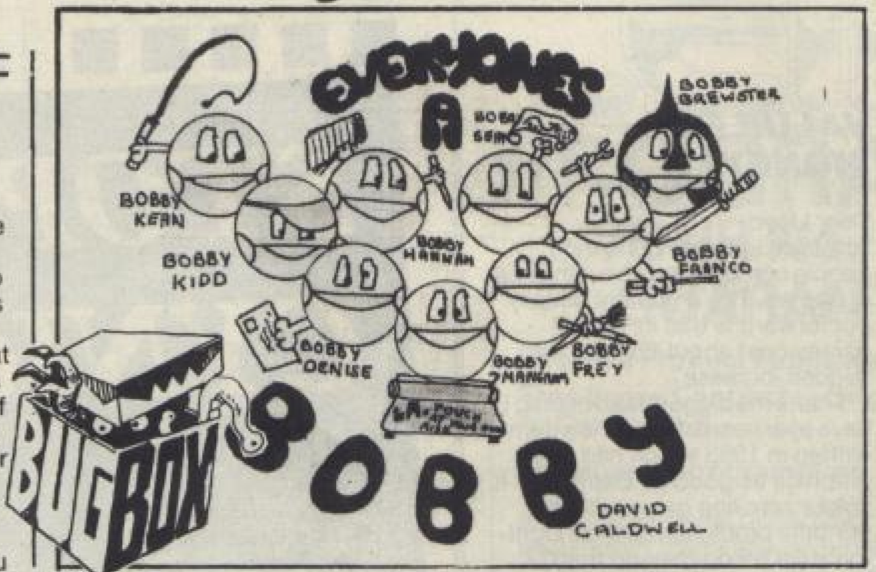
HACKED OFF

Dear Lloyd,
I write to you on the subject of hacking. Recently in another Spectrum magazine I saw a whole page of pokes for *Elite*, which hacked it to pieces. There were so many different cheats and POKEs from anything between infinite energy bombs to endless fuel, that the game would just be senseless to play. I mean what is the worth of playing *Elite* where you couldn't die? You wouldn't have any fun, or be achieving anything and the game would just be a bore.

You couldn't be credited for completing that difficult game you had been struggling over if you succumb to the disease of hacking. Some people will argue that there is no point in just leaving a game to gather dust if it's too difficult, you might as well hack it to at least see what the ending's like, but I would rather persevere and be able to say that I completed it on my own merit.

There would be no pleasure or sense of victory if you immediately hacked a game after just buying it. The price tag would be worthless. On the whole I think pokes are a complete waste of time. If you want to admit defeat, poke away.
Gary Holloway, Heston, Hounslow

I don't agree with you at all. There are those who get their fun playing a game on its own merits to the end, there are those who have more fun hacking them, and there are those who get stuck and would give up without some help. As to how much 'help' you take on a game, is obviously up to the individual, and if you wish to persevere to the end on your own — fine — let the others enjoy their games in their way.
LM



CRITICAL COMPENDIUM

Dear Lloyd,
Having been reading CRASH since issue 1, I thought it was about time I wrote in. I would just like to raise a few points that have been discussed in the Forum recently.

1. Minson. Personally I think he writes a very good column. Admittedly it has nothing to do with what he is supposed to be reporting on, but it is, in my opinion at least, very entertaining. Keep it up Minson.

2. I must agree with Brian Gillespi that software companies are becoming more and more money-conscious and less prepared to take risks. I think this is why the 128 is not catching on. It could do with a return of the the 1982 pioneering spirit. I do not think the 128 II will sell either unless the software companies release enough software for it.

3 Valente. Would the people of Tyne and Wear kindly hang, draw and quarter him please?

4. The layout of CRASH. I think that the different types of game should be kept in their own columns. Would you also put the names of the people reviewing a game down so that we can get to know different peoples' tastes.

I think that's about all, except to say better luck with the runner beans next year.
Barnaby Dellar, Stockwell, London

I'm going to plant them a touch earlier next year, perhaps that will help. As you've been a reader of CRASH since the very beginning (and there must be loads more out there in great readerland), how about writing a short essay on how CRASH has changed (or not) over the three years. I would be very interested to hear your views and doubtless so would the rest of the team.
LM

A NEW PEN WRITES

Dear Lloyd,
Just writing you a letter to test my new pen. I'll try and write quickly 'cos I know you don't have much time. I've noticed recently that most of your letters cover a number of subjects so I'll try to do the same.

BUDGET SOFTWARE: this has now become big business among software houses with, at a guess, at least half of all games being released below the £3 mark and I HATE IT. Why? Because it is being used as an excuse by authors to write absolute trash. 99% of budget software is of a very low standard indeed and almost certainly wouldn't be released at a price of £5 or more.

My plea to software companies is if you wouldn't sell it at £5 or £6 don't sell it at all. You are just lowering the overall standard of software today. People don't want to buy rubbish no matter how cheap it is. (I have bought both *Spellbound* and *Knight Tyme* — I just wish the rest were as good).

3D GAMES: In my view, games have very few types of presentation possibilities. The flat side-on technique has been used for many years now and still is with *Dynamite Dan II* etc but no-one complains. So why should someone complain when a handful of games using the same 3D technique comes on to the market. It is just another method of presentation — don't knock it!

MINSON: I think he's great, and sometimes even funny! He may have a different style of reporting than the rest of the CRASH team, but variety is the spice of life. Or so they say.

MANGRAM: Yes you! Personally, I couldn't give a Commodore 64 (or what!) you really are. As long as you are just being your usual informative, chatty, intelligent self (grovel) then you are fine by me. So stop printing letters with stupid explanations of your being. Please!

Well that's it. Good luck with your new magazine. I hope it's as good as CRASH is now, and that it doesn't go to your head as quickly as Old Flatulance Bitter goes to mine!
Jeremy Moore, Marsh Baldon, Oxford

Well, we're really having a 'bash the bashers' session this month, and why not? As to budget software, I think I'm inclined to agree with you. It's always nice to get a really fine game for two quid, but so many are pretty awful. It seems a shame to me that the industry has polarised so much that everything is either under £2 or over £9. Doesn't this mean that somehow reasonable games can be done for around the £6 mark?

I find Minson funny too, especially when he wears a grey shirt and tie and tries to look like a fifties Fleet Street reporter. Great stuff! Modesty prevents me from commenting on the rest of your letter.
LM



EXPENSIVE ENTERTAINMENT

Dear Lloyd,
With reference to the recent correspondence on the alcoholic propensity of Computer Software journalists such as your own Mr Minson. (P Coggins, September issue).

It seems to this erudite correspondent that such alchoholic over-indulgence is directly related to another grievance that is often aimed in the pages of your august (not the month, stupid!) publication — that of the extortionate (well, often anyway) price of software. It does not take a genius (like wot I is) to mentally compute that if software houses did not spend so much money on indulging the predelictions of semi-inebriate epicurian journalists in the hope of a favourable review of their latest offering(s), then they could afford to cut the retail price of their products.

Of course, this alone would not be enough, maybe if said software houses were to restrain themselves from constantly advertising their games months in advance of launch (if, indeed, such products ever come to be launched!), the money saved (sorry, Advertising Department!!) could be again put towards a price cut.

Finally, full marks to the (beautiful) lady on your stand at the PCW show on Friday who was able, where all others failed, to inform me that INCENTIVE were not exhibiting at the show and thus *GAC* was not on demonstration (no thanks to INCENTIVE!!).
DGW Griffith, Cheltenham, Glos

It's true, of course, that chronically inebriated twisters of prose like Scott FitzMinson, do add up to costing the industry a lot of money. The hardest part of any software launch is to persuade them from the bottle to the screen before they totter off to another launch. On the other hand, we'd never get to hear about anything if it wasn't for the press launches. Promotion may add up to a substantial sum for a game, but it' still a small amount of the total expenditure, and without it, software houses can't sell into the chain stores and the like. As I'm sure you are aware, it isn't love that makes the world go round but money — unless you're a press hack of course, then it's booze.
LM

VALUE FOR MONEY?

Dear Lloyd,
I am sick to death of hearing people complaining about the cost of games. The argument usually put forward is that in 1982/3 games cost about £5, why the sudden increase?

This is the biggest load of crap I have ever heard. Show me a game written in 1983 which had 3D graphics as good as *Batman* or a colour scrolling game without attribute problems, such as *Lightforce* (HOW do they do that)?? Come to that any scrolling game at all, with the exception of *Lunar Jetman*, one of the most addictive games ever written.

What I am saying is that considering the complexity of new games and the time, advertising and promotion involved. And also the quality of the actual games, is it so surprising that games have become £3-4 more expensive?

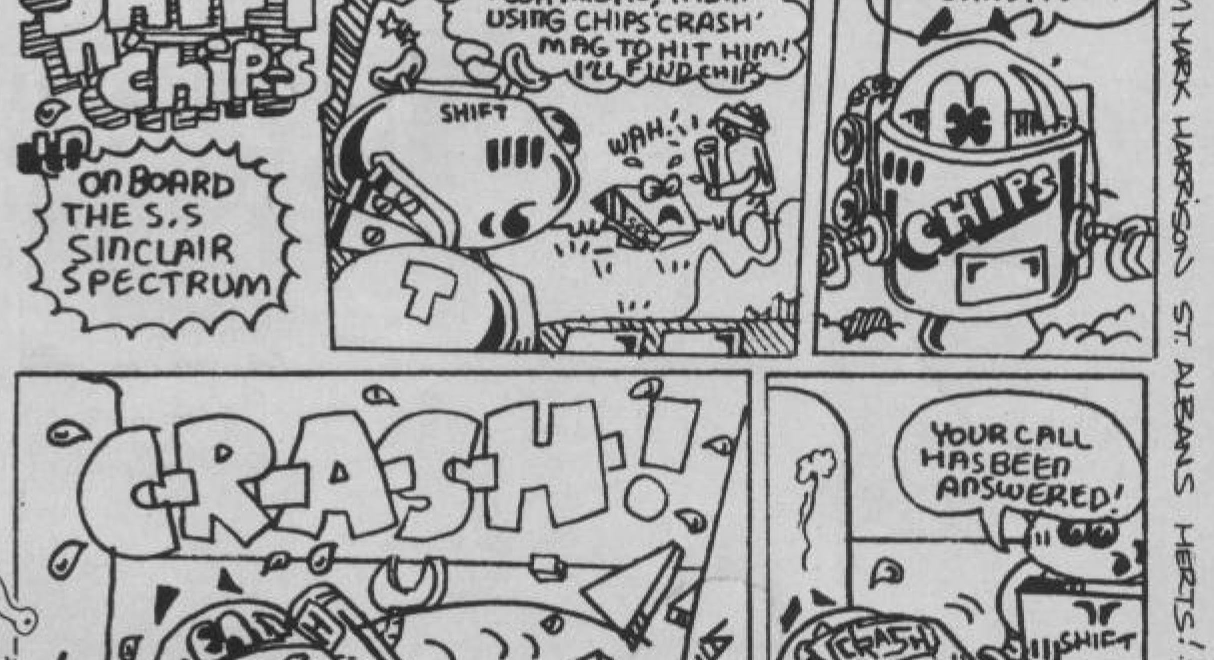
So tell the whinging ratbags to keep their comments to themselves, we don't need them.
Robert Hayden, Lings, Northampton
PS Who needs Claire Hirsch with the adorable Hannah Smith around?

Who indeed?! It's nice to hear someone defending progress in the games market for a change and, bearing in mind that clever graphics don't necessarily make a great game or become an excuse for jacking up prices, I agree with your sentiments sir.
LM

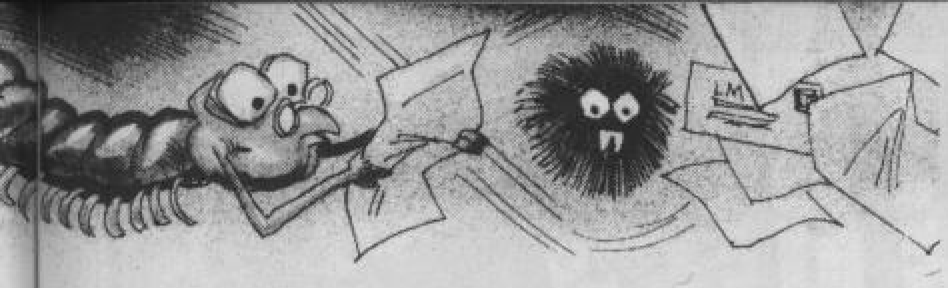
STOP THIS CYNICISM

Dear CRASH,
On the subject of ULTIMATE 'clones'. I suggest that some people should be less cynical about 3D viewpoint games, after all, it is only a viewpoint. Imagine if *Green Beret* were called a *Cauldron II* clone because of its side view, *Bounder* a *Panzadrome* clone because of its top viewpoint, why doesn't this happen? The answer is massively different, but the majority of 3D games also have totally different gameplay: *Movie*, *Fairlight*, *Pyracurse*, *Kirel*, *Spindizzy*, *Molecule Man*, *Quazatron* and *Paperboy*! True there are a lot of games which are real ULTIMATE clones but not that many. But games like *Fairlight* have been tagged us ULTIMATE clones where, if you think about it, the graphics even are of a very different style (and they're better). So you utterly unsatisfiable people stop moaning about the number of 3D games and why not pick on 2D games instead? Um what else. . . . er, oh yes, I think that GARGOYLE, ELITE and IMAGINE are really ace, and *Green Beret* should have been a smash.
Timothy Rouse, Kings Heath, Birmingham
PS As for Mr (Hi I'm an *Oranginaholic*) Hunto (Totally outrageous) Minson, cor! wot a lad! wot a party animal! Someone wake him up please.

Let sleeping dogs lie, I say. Wake him up and he's as loud as his shirts. It won't do! As to the clones, I'm sure we're going through a patch where there are so many good games around and yet people still feel the need to complain, so they do. Once we were all thrilled with a few unidentifiable blobs or arrows for heroes — how much better life is today, only some three years after 'the good old days'.
LM







●●●●●●

ADVERTISING ANALYSIS

Dear Lloyd,
In reply to your letters on advertising I would like to express my views on the subject. Advertising serves two purposes, one is to inform the public on what games are going to be released, the price and other details. The other is that it helps sell the game. By using fancy artwork and glamorous phrases and licensed people advertisers provoke interest in the game which would lead to more sales. For instance *Friday the 13th* and *World Cup Carnival* only generated their sales from clever advertising. Many a time I have been persuaded to buy games solely on their advertising. No matter what people say, everyone is effected by advertising in some way.

Also, I have seen games in WH Smith underpriced. For example I saw *V* for £5.95 and *Arc of Yesod* £5.95 as well.

C Counsell, Hedge End, Southampton, Hants

Well that makes a change from the usual accusation of the chains over-pricing a game!

Of course advertising affects everyone in some way, often we're not even aware that we have been affected, some times for the good, sometimes for the bad. At its best, I think advertising can actually brighten life up considerably.
LM

3D GAMES

Dear Lloyd,
I'm sorry to say that I agree with N Potter's letter (ish 32) about the recent spate of 3D games, compared to the variety that Commie (Spit) user's have been getting. OK, some of the 3D games are not bad (*Batman*), but I am sick of seeing cheap, tacky versions, as well as ULTIMATE's drivel. I look forward to the conversions of the *Eidolon* and the such.

However, I think Spectrum adventures are far superior to Commie versions, and will invest more of my meagre amount of money into them if the 3D games survive much longer.

Now to cover some more points that have caught my eye in FORUM. Firstly I would like to speak out in favour of Hunter. S Minson, he is a vital ingredient of your magazine and removing him would be like scrapping FORUM. He is very witty and is the first article I read after purchasing CRASH.

What's happened to 'on the cover' and 'Homegrown Software'. What has really happened to Robin Candy, I think your were jealous of his increasing popularity and killed him, his pastures new is really a field where you buried him.

Jamie Butler, Worrall, Sheffield

○○○○○○

You're right about the adventures, except that the Commodore does offer tremendous scope as long as you own a disk drive. It doesn't seem that Hunter MinFitzSimmons is in any real danger of being removed other than by his own liver (unless it's by members of the Loud Hawaiian Shirt Abatement Society). On the Cover is probably due for a return soon, but I think we had just about run through everyone at the time it stopped! Homegrown Software is suffering the pre-Christmas rush period (which makes it hard to fit in time-consuming activities) and Rob Candy is alive, well and living in Ludlow College, not some field. In fact he stuck his head in a few minutes ago, and as far as I could tell there was a body attached to it.
LM

A PEDANT WRITES . . .

Dear Lloyd,
You will first notice that I am writing this missive in red ink (Readers of the Forum won't know, but believe me I am). This is partly because it was the only pen I could find, but also because I am a little angry. (Now you're scared, aren't you?) What has aroused my wrath? Sloppiness! That's what. My friends do it, my mother does it. Even my economics teacher used to do it. Now even CRASH has fallen into the trap, in Issue 33.

To elaborate: what is written on the front of the box of a certain game is, "TRIVIAL PURSUIT". There is no 'S'. There's only one game in the box for flips sake! Why the plural? Why does everybody do it wrong?

Am I the only sane person in the world? Sometimes I think I must go mad. Everyone of your critics in the October review got it wrong. Is it some new psychological trick like; Paris in the Spring? Aaargghhhhhhhhhhhh!

Yours sincerelys, Stuart C Marlow(s), Banbury, Oxon

Sorrys about thats, its the sorts of things thats happens when there's lots of peoples about who don't know English properlys. Definitely slopinesss, slapped wrists all rounds. Happys now?
LMs

◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆◆

So, there we go for another month. Not long now to CRASH's anniversary. Ish 35 completes three years of existence. How do we do it? But just in case you haven't been around for the last three years, the address for Forum letters is, LLOYD MANGRAM, CRASH FORUM, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB. See you next month.

DESIGN A MONSTER



Willie Rushton, one of the people behind the TV series, TRAPDOOR, poses with a selection of TRAPDOOR goodies. Some of them will find their way into the PIRANHA Goodiebags on offer . . .

I suppose there could be something nasty living in the vaults beneath CRASH Towers. Every now and then, I get sent down into the dark and murky cellars to search for some long forgotten piece of software. Of course no-one else will go down there because they're not daft. They know that something nasty lurks down there — that's why they send me . . .

Just to make things really nasty they sometimes wait until I'm down in the vaults and then turn off all the lights and make horrible monstery noises, scaring me half to death. It's really not fair. Of course I know there's nothing down there, but, well . . . you never know . . .

I spend all my time running around doing this and that, at everyone's beck and call and the inhabitants of CRASH Towers do their best to make my life difficult. I've got a lot of sympathy for Berk, the lead character in PIRANHA's latest game. He's definitely another candidate for the Union of Put-upon Minions and Allied Operatives, along with yours truly.

Poor old Berk lives in a castle which houses a trapdoor. Below this trapdoor lurk all sorts of hideous monsters. Eeek! I was just managing to convince myself that there really wasn't anything down in the CRASH vaults when I had a quick play of *Trapdoor*. I had just got Berk to open the trapdoor and something nasty had leapt out when some horrible person from CRASH said that it looked exactly like whatever it is that lives in the CRASH vaults. Well, that was it. I spent the rest of the day huddled in the broom cupboard while Editorial made nasty noises outside and laughed a lot.

Anyway, they say that the best way to overcome a phobia is to confront it. Maybe you lot could help. Why don't you draw a picture of the sort of monster which you think lives beneath CRASH Towers? Just use your imagination, but please don't make your works of art too huge — remember that I have to cart everything around. When I've finished looking at all your pictures of the CRASH Towers Cellar Monster, I won't be frightened any more when those nasty CRASH people throw me into the cellars and lock the door. (Wimper.)

Crash Competition



30 Copies of TRAPDOOR up for grabs!

In return for your troubles PIRANHA are offering large goody bags for the three best artistic creations. These will contain *Trapdoor* paraphanalia created to go with the TV series. Thirty runners-up are in line for a copy of the game, too.

So, zoom your entries off to me making sure they don't arrive any later than November 20th. Mark them: CELLAR MONSTER COMPETITION, CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.


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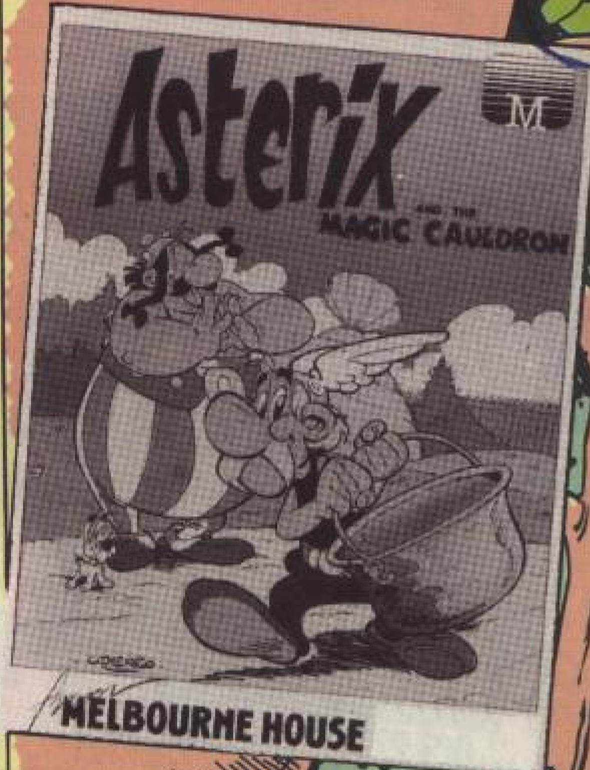
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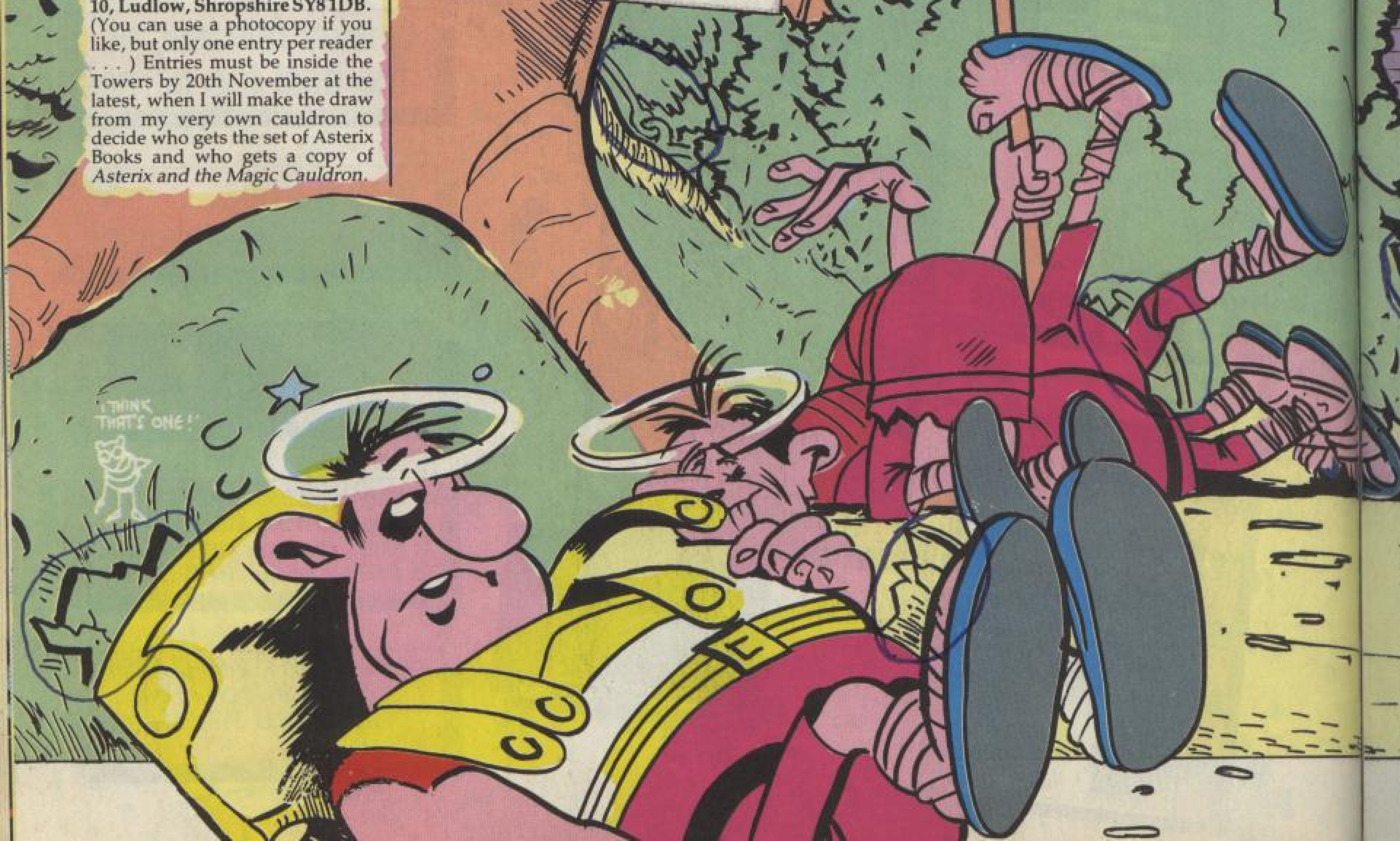
50 copies of ASTERIX AND THE

Oh dear, what a clumsy fool that Obelix, faithful friend to Asterix, is: he's just gone and broken Getafix's ever-so-useful Magic Cauldron that's used to brew the magic potion. Without the brew Asterix's small Gaulic village will get attacked by those horrible Romans.

Vitalstatistix, the village leader, is not too pleased with clumsy Obelix. He's sent Asterix and Obelix off to locate the seven pieces of smashed cauldron — and the bits have been scattered all over the shop. In the game produced by MELBOURNE HOUSE Obelix obviously needs not only Asterix's help but yours too. If you want to join in with this mammoth quest, here's a chance to collect a freebie copy of *Asterix and the Magic Cauldron*, courtesy of MELBOURNE HOUSE.

As you can see from the piccy on this page, Asterix and Obelix are distinctly puzzled by their predicament. Only you can help them . . . Hidden in the picture are seven pieces of magic cauldron. What you have to do is to locate all seven and put a neat little ring around each one. When you have found and ringed all seven, cut out the piccy and post it off to: **CAULDRON COLLECTION, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.** (You can use a photocopy if you like, but only one entry per reader . . .) Entries must be inside the Towers by 20th November at the latest, when I will make the draw from my very own cauldron to decide who gets the set of Asterix Books and who gets a copy of *Asterix and the Magic Cauldron*.





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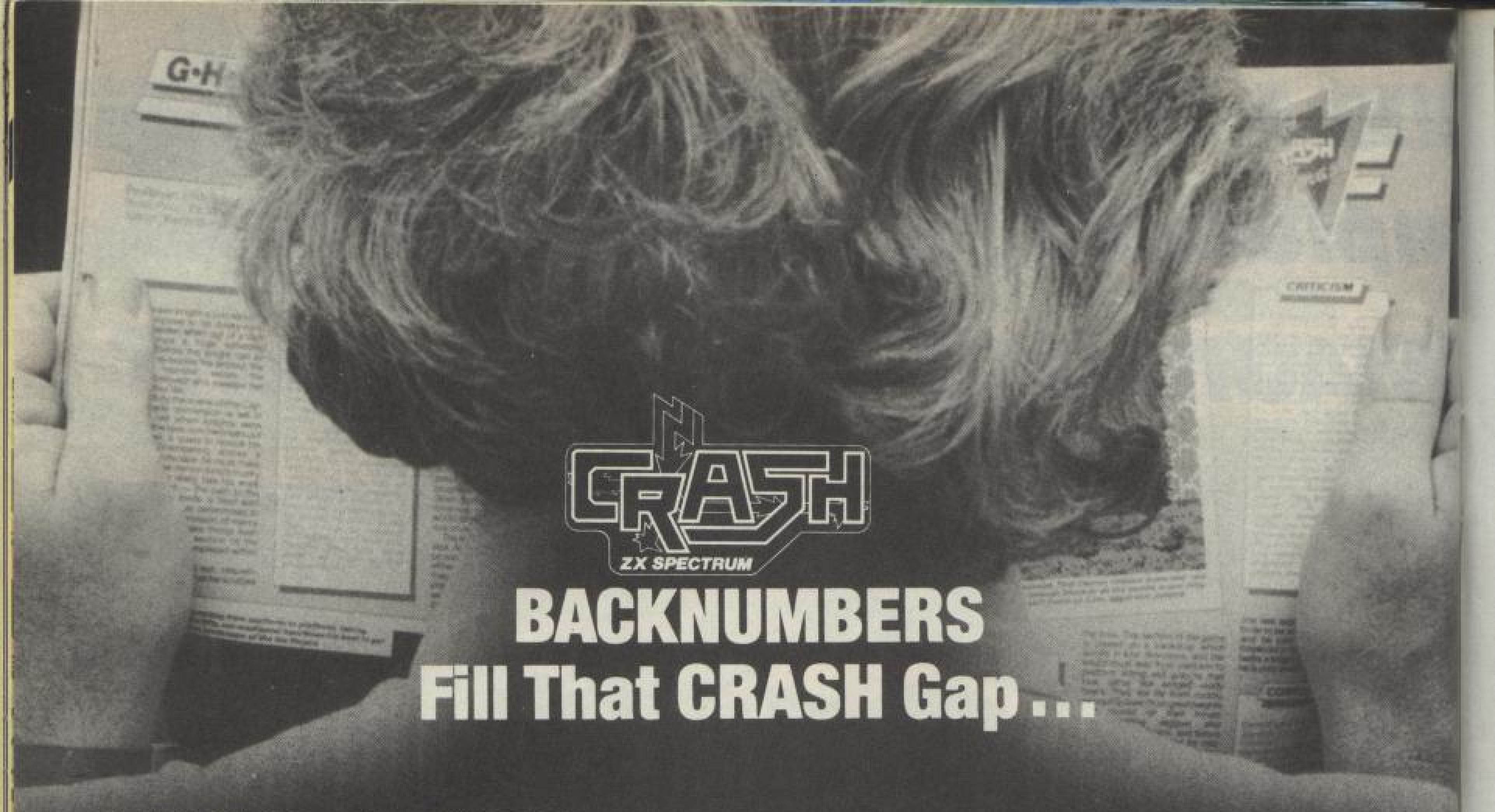


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CRASH
ZX SPECTRUM

BACKNUMBERS
Fill That CRASH Gap . . .

3:April 84 ●Missile Command games●Living Guide●Code Name Mat

4:May 84 ●The Quill Utility●Graphics utilities●Microdrive●'Pengo' games●Living Guide

10:Nov 84 ●Battlefield Joystick — comparisons●Deus Ex Machina

17:Jun 85 ●Denton Designs●Frankie●Spectrum surgery●Sinclair Story 3●Knight Lore Map 1●Underwurlde Map 2●Tape to Microdrive●Leonardo Graphics utility●Datel sound sampler●Artist: David Thorpe

18:Jul 85 ●Gremlin Graphics profile●Artist Bob Wakelin●Sinclair TV●Tape Magazines●Leonardo utility part two●CRASHBACK looks again at games in issue 8●Gyron Map of Atrium●Modems round-up●And the cover that had the Jehovas Jumping!

19:Aug 85 ●WITHOUT PAGES 123,124,125 and 126. WITH:●CRL Profile●Pull out Oliposter — Fighting Spectrum●Mirrorsoft Profile●Inside the Timex 2068●Round Up of BASIC compilers●On the Cover Artist Rich Shenfield●Maps of Dynamite Dan and Shadowfire

20:Sep 85 ●ALIEN 8 and DUN DARACH maps●Electronic Pencil Company Profile●Part Two of BASIC Compilers Round-up●The 64K Spectrum●Design Design Autoprofile, Part 1●Rod Cousens interview

21:Oct 85 ●Previews of MARSPORT, ASTROCLONE, ELITE●NODES OF YESOD map●Holografix profile — how to make a Hologram●Crashtionnaire analysis●Platinum Productions profile

22:Nov 85 ●Feature on small computer magazines — looking at the opposition●Microdrive tips and hints in TECH NICHE and part two of the fast storage feature●Susan Rowe is on the Cover●An inside look at Fantasy Gamebooks

23:Dec 85 ●Visit to Melbourne House●Minson goes Surfing●The Design Design autoprofile ends●Computer graphics feature — On The Cover is Dave Beeson from Central TV●Scary cover and Scary Preview of Friday 13th

Xmas 1985/6 ●On the Cover Special — our very own Oliver Frey occupies five pages●Profile of the Gargoyle Games crew●Lloyd's Lookback, 1985 revisited●Hewson Consultants profile●Short story●Festive Fun and Frolics

25:Feb 86 ●Durell — the profile●A chat with the Microsphere team●Double Dose of Jetman●Gremlin Graphics bring a Ninja to the Spectrum●TECH NICHE looks at a FORTH add-on and extensions to ZX BASIC

26:Mar 86 ●ST BRIDE's Profile● A first look at the Spectrum 128●Micronet 800●Romantic Robot's Multiface One under scrutiny●Diary of 2186

27:Apr 86 ●Massive 23 page Playing Tips Supplement●1985 Readers Awards results●Mel Croucher interview●Imagine profile●Round up of 128K games●A visit to the first Play By Mail convention

28:May 86 ●Update on the Fanzine scene●MARTECH profile and PLANETS preview●DIY Composite Video Interface●Inside Cheetah's SpecDrum●FRONTLINE Mini Strategyback●CRASHTIONNAIRE 86 analysis

29:Jun 86 ●First PBM MAILBOX and CRASH GALLERY●SpecDrum listing●Homegrown software●REALTIME profile●Compilations compared●Maps of CYLU, SIR FRED, SABOTEUR and Parts 1 and 2 of TANTALUS

30:Jul 86 ●More CRASH/RAINBIRD Gallery●More Homegrown Software●THE BIRTH OF A GAME: some early entries●Good Games by DESIGN●Luna Jetman returns

31:Aug 86 ●Hannah goes wrestling!●A look in the DRAGON's LAIR●Sinclair 'LOKI' myths exploded●Erniesoft Interview●Pete Tamlyn starts looking at Role Playing Computer games●Wordprocessor roundup

32:Sept 86 ●GAC reviewed●The Music Box opened●Pete Tamlyn concludes●MIKRO-GEN's Dave Perry talks about Wally and Ricky Steele●Repairing your Quickshot 2●Dan Dare arrives!

33:Oct 86 ●Jon Ritman — Mr BATMAN and Mr MATCH DAY●The GENESIS project: the programming begins●Hunter S Minson goes missing!●Multitracking SpecDrum●Costa Panaya interviewed

Issues 1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 are now out of stock.SORRY! Back issues are going fast — better get your orders in quick. It's probably worth telephoning if you want to order early issues, as we're getting short. And if you missed Issue 19, we can now complete the gap in your collection with a trimmed down version, which has a tasteful sticker added to the front cover announcing the fact!

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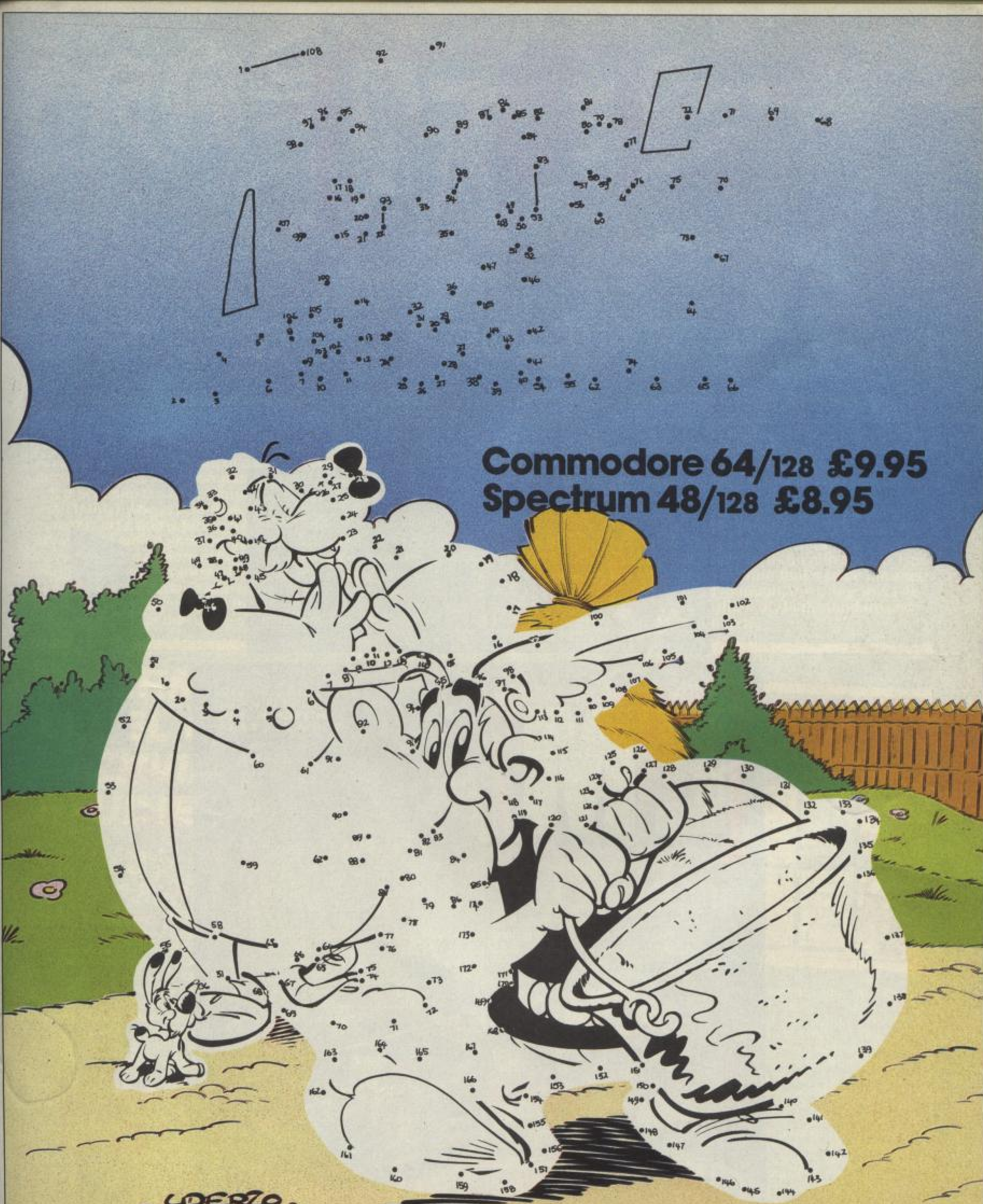
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CRASH COURSE

by Rosetta McLeod



GIVE GIRLS A BREAK!

A few months ago, I mentioned the problems that schools and parents are facing in interesting girls in computers. The London Borough of Croydon has now published a fascinating document entitled *Girls and Information Technology* which reports the results of a survey commissioned by the Equal Opportunities Commission.

It discusses the observation that computers seem to be used more by boys and male teachers than by their female counterparts, and refers to a study carried by the MEP Primary Project which showed that twice as many boys as girls have access to a micro at home. Why should this be? Are girls intrinsically less interested in computers than boys are?

If parents consider it more important to provide home computers for sons rather than daughters what implication does this have for the future of women in an age of technology? In many secondary schools, computers have been linked with the mathematics department and too much emphasis has been placed on programming and numerical uses rather than data-processing and other social implications. Another problem is that traditional stereotyping seems to occur very early with boys being perceived to have more interest than girls in new technology.

Girls may be keen to learn word-processing but seem to have little curiosity about other computer uses. Perhaps the problem lies in the content of the commercial software available. Girls are not nearly so interested as boys in arcade-type games and even educational software tends to be directed towards male interests. Luckily though, the programs I've looked at this month are of a particularly high standard and will appeal equally to boys and girls.

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL GEOGRAPHY — ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

Producer: **Scisoft**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Age range: **9-13 years**

There are four programs in this package each involving geographical skills. 'Treasure Hunt' contains three games based on map reading, use of compass directions, and estimation of distances. In game one, you are left stranded somewhere on the map and you have to reach the Youth Hostel safely. The second game involves collecting treasure, while in the third game you have to explore the map in order to find the hidden treasure. Each game is played on one of eight maps which use standard ordnance survey symbols, and you can choose to enter his commands using either bearings (from 000 to 360 degrees) or points of the compass. It is also possible to choose between single keyword entry for commands (w for walk, h for heading) or typing each command in full. A very useful feature of this game is that the computer will actually teach you the map symbols if required, and there is an optional quiz to test your understanding.

Around Britain in 48 Hours is an excellent game for improving a child's knowledge of the geography of the United Kingdom. The object of the game is to find the hidden name of a city or town by travelling round the country by road, rail or air, to collect the various letters. At the start of the game, you have £300 and a time limit of 48 hours in which to find the hidden word. You have to remember that travelling by road will be much cheaper, but much slower, than going by plane, and that by road and rail a larger number of places are available to visit. A map of the country is displayed on the screen, and the computer shows you the possible routes you can take from your position.

This is a very well constructed game, which will do a lot to improve a child's knowledge of his country, although I don't quite understand why it is impossible to fly from certain places which do have airports! In comparison, I found the simulation *Spread of Disease in Woodland* rather boring. The aim is to show how a disease such as Dutch Elm can spread from month to month, with the screen graphics displaying the numbers of healthy, immune, and diseased trees.

The wood is represented by a grid, and you have to start the model by putting in healthy and diseased trees, with spaces between to stop the spread of disease. You can also change the probabilty factors which control the spread of the disease, the chance of an infected tree surviving, and the number of months the disease will last in a tree before killing it or leaving it immune.

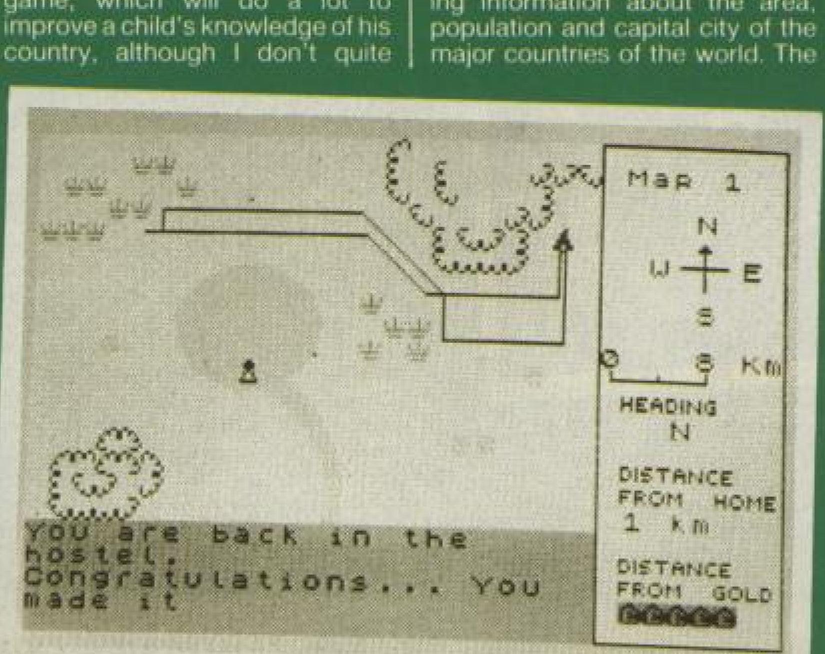
Although the program has an important message, the simulation is lacking in any element of fun, and I found that children failed to be interested by it.

The final program, 'Countries of the World', is a database containing information about the area, population and capital city of the major countries of the world. The



menu provides four options: you can find all details about a country, list all of the countries, search for a particular piece of information, or call up the help page. The program is useful for showing children what a database is and giving them practice in finding out pieces of information.

All in all, this package provides a good balance of content and activity. The accompanying booklet gives a detailed description of each game, together with ideas for other activities.



COMMENTS

Control keys: clearly described both on the screen and in the booklet
Keyboard play: good
Graphics: very good
Use of colour: bright and attractive
General rating: good value for money



THE GIDDY GAME SHOW

Producer: **Mirrorsoft**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Age range: **under 5 years**

This program is a spin-off from Yorkshire Television's *Giddy Game Show* for very young children, and uses the same popular-characters of Giddy, Gus, Gorilla and Princess Galaxzena. The four games on the tape are designed to help children recognise the letters of the alphabet and associate them with everyday objects.

The first game, 'Alphabet', introduces the child to the various letters, which are sensibly split into four groups. For each letter, a picture appears on the screen showing one of the characters with an object which starts with the letter being taught. The letter is displayed in the top left hand corner, and the word for the object shown, with it's initial letter in a different colour, is at the bottom of the picture. When the child can recognise the letters, he is ready to move on to game two, 'Jigsaw'.

This time, nine squares are shown on the screen, with a letter in the middle one. The letter is then broken up into different pieces and the player has to put it back together again one piece at a time. This is a very good way of drawing attention to the shape of a letter. 'Hungry Gorilla' is a simple game with two levels of difficulty. Pictures of six sorts of foods are displayed with a word at the bottom of the screen. One letter of the word is highlighted, and the player has to select the correct letter and picture to match up with the highlighted letter, so that Gorilla can be fed. At level one, Giddy moves round the screen from picture to picture, and when he is hovering over the correct food, the child simply has to press SPACE. At the second level, however, the letters of the alphabet are split into four groups — a to f, g to l, m to s, and t to z.

In the final game, 'Princess Galaxzena and the Maze', the child has to help the princess to find her way to the castle to rescue the imprisoned king. On her way through the maze, she must avoid passing any objects beginning with one of the forbidden letters displayed on the screen. As acceptable objects are passed, their names are spelt out at the bottom of the picture. If the princess accidentally goes past three forbidden letters, she ends up in the dungeon with the king. This is a very enjoyable little game which motivates young children to succeed. A 12-page colour story book accompanies the game, explaining what to do, and reinforcing the skills being taught.

COMMENTS

Control keys: SPACE and arrow keys
Keyboard play: good
Graphics: excellent
Use of colours: bright and clear
General rating: four well thought-out games which will have great appeal for the very young child — though parents may be driven mad by the tunes!



CRACK IT! TOWERS

Producer: **Mirrorsoft**
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Age range: **puzzle fans of any age**

Crack It! Towers is a collection of puzzles which you must complete to steal the secret of Count Crack It's powers. Each of the rooms in the Towers contains a puzzle which has to be solved and to enter a room a player has to pass a mental arithmatic test.

The first room is the home of Oswald the Rubber-necked Duck and the puzzle is to guess what Oswald wants for his dinner. Puzzles in the other rooms include working out the next number in a sequence, moving through a maze by means of the directions north, south, east or west, working out co-ordinates and completing the missing letters in a word. If a player fails a challenge he gets a ducking in a moat infested with piranha and even if he is successful in the puzzles he still has to cope with other problems which crop up.

There are three skill levels to choose from — difficult, more difficult or impossible — and there is also the option of changing the sets of words in the word problems, a feature which extends the game's educational potential. A nicely written Visitors' Guide Book accompanies the game, giving hints on how to solve the puzzles and introducing the characters — Jim the Jellyfish, Albert the Alien and so on. The only thing that bothered me about this game is the claim that it is suitable for 'puzzle fans of any age'. *Crack It! Towers* is a game most definitely for children aged seven and over — why pretend otherwise?

COMMENTS

Control keys: each puzzle has different requirements and the control keys are clearly described in the booklet
Keyboard play: good, but it is annoying that if you inadvertently press the wrong key it is impossible to delete
Graphics: very nice
Use of colour: good
General ratings: an enjoyable program with a sense of humour which children will enjoy. The large range of puzzles and problems will hold a child's attention for quite a while.

FLETCHER'S CASTLE

Producer: **Fernleaf Educational Software**
Retail price: **£10.00**
Age range: **8-12 years**

Like *The Perfume Hunter*, this game is designed for group, rather than individual use.

The story line is that a knight has been given a gift of land and has to build a castle quickly in order to defend it. He is given only ten days to complete the work so that he can demonstrate his authority over the native population, and in that time he must prepare the mound and the ditch, set guards, fell and haul trees, build the tower and fences, and obtain food.

The accompanying booklet contains a pupil worksheet which may be photocopied, and this allows the group to keep a record of the work done each day together with the gains or losses of soldiers and workers.

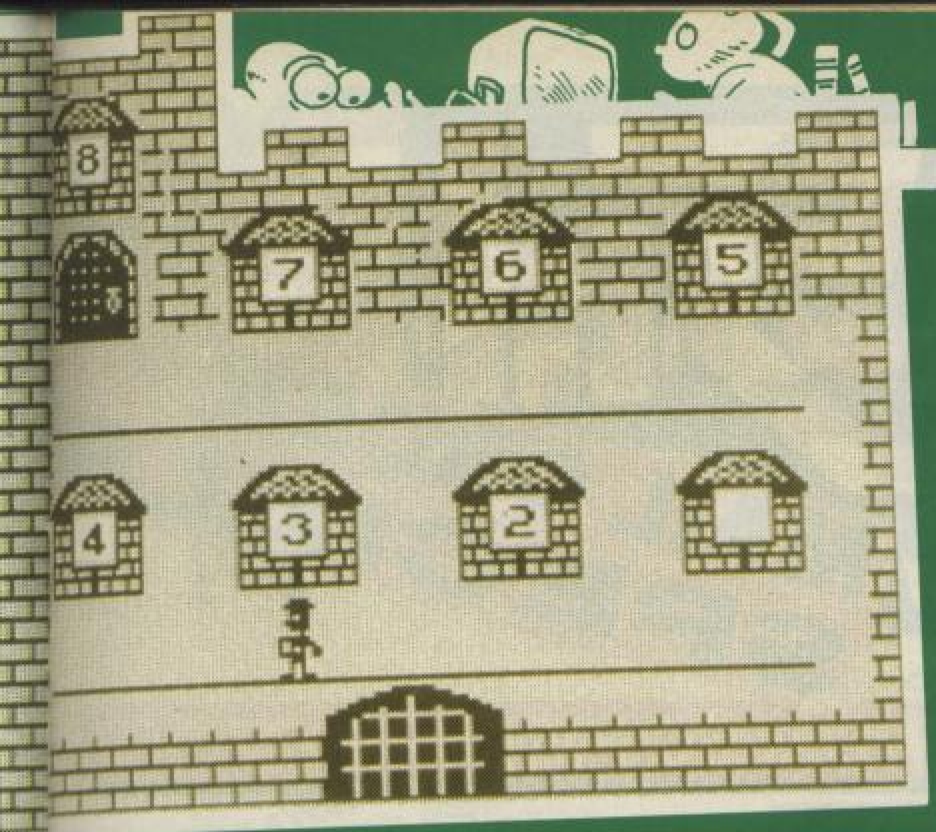
At the beginning, the group are told that the type of castle to be constructed is a wooden motte and bailey, that they have 91 soldiers to help them, but that the 85 local workers cannot be trusted alone. Their first task is to evaluate from the map three possible sites, each of which has advantages and disadvantages.

Gradually more and more decisions have to be reached, so that the soldiers and workmen are all sensibly and usefully employed. Every so often, the screen display shows in graphic form how the work is coming along, and gives an up-date on the state of the workforce, some of whom may have been the victims of accidents, surprise attacks, or lack of food.

Fletcher's Castle would be an excellent resource for use within a program of work on the Norman invasion. Although the historical content of the program is very limited, its success lies in the focus it provides for logical reasoning, and the development of oral language skills. Children will love this game, and the teacher or parent will find it fascinating to observe the group dynamics.

COMMENTS

Control keys: single key commands
Keyboard play: responsive
Graphics: good
Use of colour: bright and sensible, for both the graphics and the text
General rating: this is an interesting and absorbing simulation which will spark off a whole variety of learning activities. Highly recommended.





THE PERFUME HUNTER

Producer: **Fernleaf Educational Software**
Retail price: **£11.50**
Age range: **8-12 years**

This game is designed to be used by groups of three or four children, and aims to offer an experience in the use of logical thinking and reasoning to resolve a problem.

Some bottles of perfume have been lost in long grass. A dog is on hand to help, and knows when it is close to a bottle, but not its exact position. The players have to move the dog around a grid using north, south, east or west commands. A set number of moves is allowed in which to find the bottles and return the dog to his kennel.

As well as the grid, the screen displays the number of bottles still to be collected, the number ot bottles next to the dog's present position, and the number of moves left. Certain squares on the grid cannot be moved into, nor can a bottle be hidden in these squares. The value of the game lies in the group discussion that takes place as the players try to deduce the correct moves Strategy also enters into the game as the children decide how to cover as many squares as possible within the moves allowed.

There are six levels of difficulty to choose from, and it is possible to store the results of up to 12 games. *The Perfume Hunter* is a useful little program which children will enjoy.

COMMENTS

Control keys: N,S,E,W.
Keyboard play: good
Graphics: adequate
Use of colour: attractive
General rating: useful for getting children to cooperate

STORYMAKER

Producer: **Arnold-Wheaton**
Retail price: **£4.95**
Age Range: **8 and over**

This is an unusual program which aims to motivate children to write stories. In *Storymaker*, children are introduced to a picture character called Alpha, who helps them to choose the structure for a story.

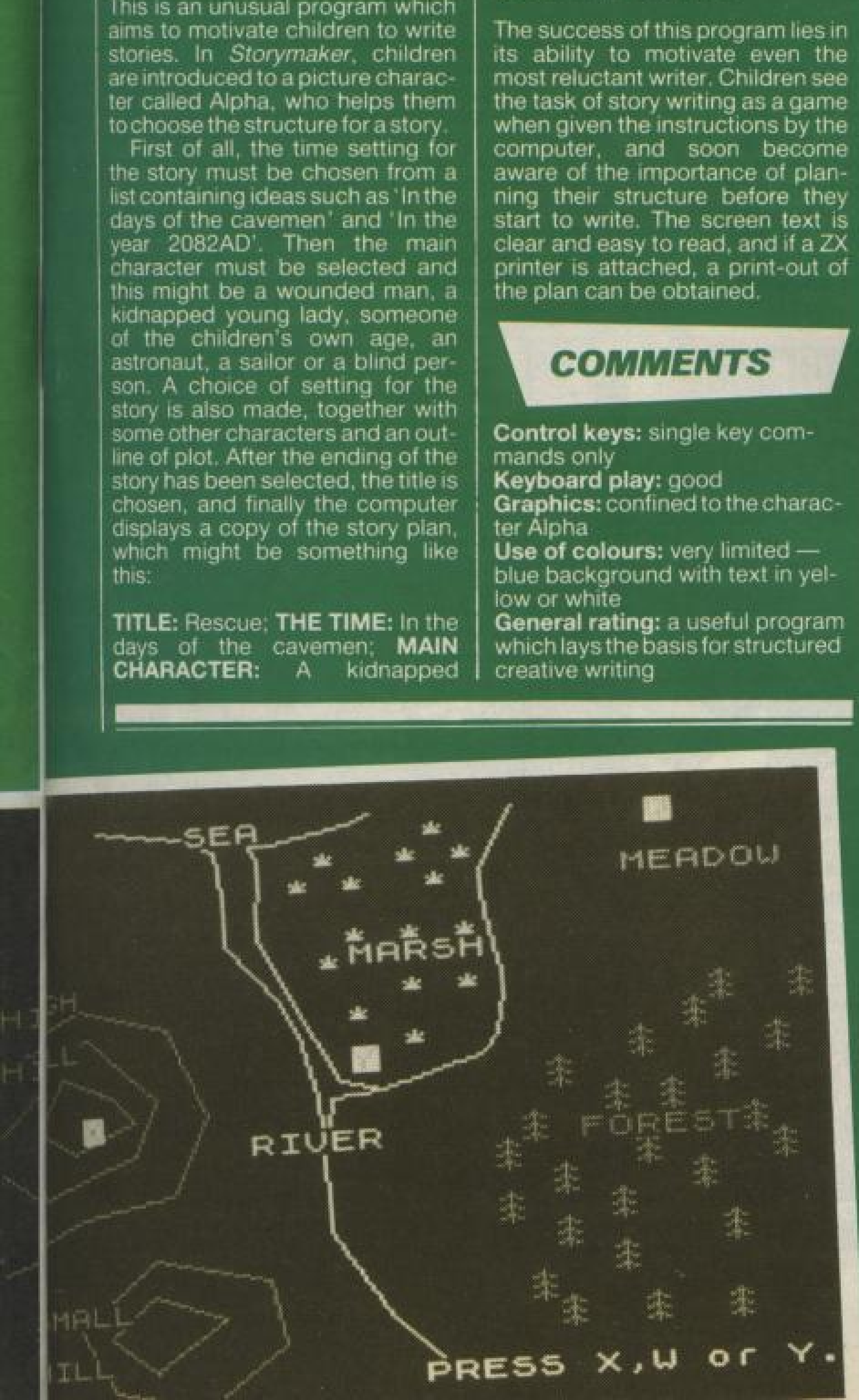
First of all, the time setting for the story must be chosen from a list containing ideas such as 'In the days of the cavemen' and 'In the year 2082AD'. Then the main character must be selected and this might be a wounded man, a kidnapped young lady, someone of the children's own age, an astronaut, a sailor or a blind person. A choice of setting for the story is also made, together with some other characters and an outline of plot. After the ending of the story has been selected, the title is chosen, and finally the computer displays a copy of the story plan, which might be something like this:

TITLE: Rescue; **THE TIME:** In the days of the cavemen; **MAIN CHARACTER:** A kidnapped young lady; **THE PLACE:** In the middle of the sea; **OTHER CHARACTER:** A friendly boy or girl; **THE PLOT:** They travel through time; **ENDING:** Their goodness is rewarded.

The success of this program lies in its ability to motivate even the most reluctant writer. Children see the task of story writing as a game when given the instructions by the computer, and soon become aware of the importance of planning their structure before they start to write. The screen text is clear and easy to read, and if a ZX printer is attached, a print-out of the plan can be obtained.

COMMENTS

Control keys: single key commands only
Keyboard play: good
Graphics: confined to the character Alpha
Use of colours: very limited — blue background with text in yellow or white
General rating: a useful program which lays the basis for structured creative writing



TREASURE

Producer: **Fernleaf Educational Software**
Retail Price: **£11.50**
Age range: **8-12 years**

The main objective in this game is to offer practice in multiplication, though there is also considerable scope for deductive reasoning. A grid is displayed on the screen and the object is to find the treasure which has been hidden at random in one of the squares.

The game has been designed to be played by two groups of children who take it in turns to position marker buoys. If, for instance, a group choose to set a marker buoy in a square with the co-ordinates 4,2, they first have to find two factors which make 42 and enter the command 6x7 or 7x6. The buoy will be one of three colours; red means next to, or on, the position of the treasure; purple means within three squares; white means not near the treasure.

Younger children will find this game quite difficult especially as 1x a number is not allowed, but much discussion can be generated in the groups as the children work out the best strategy for revealing the treasure without giving any advantage to the opposition. A work sheet containing a blank grid is provided for use with the program and players are encouraged to record the clues given and work out their reasoning on the sheet.

This is a very useful strategy program which provides a practical stimulus for learning multiplication tables.

COMMENTS

Control keys: number keys and single letter commands
Keyboard play: fast
Graphics: none, apart from grid
Use of colour: simple but effective
General rating: gives a context for the learning of multiplication tables, and encourages children to discuss and plan their strategy. Great fun!

CRASH

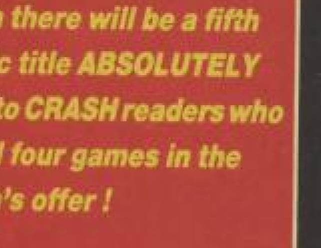
ZX SPECTRUM

MAIL ORDER SPECIALS!

AN EXCLUSIVE SPECTRUM SOFTWARE OFFER FOR CRASH READERS!

Now you can get your hands on these amazing all-time classic Spectrum games at a new super low price through CRASH Mail Order. What's more, if you order ALL FOUR of this month's selection, we'll send you a fifth game entirely free !

Every month ELITE SYSTEMS are releasing four budget-priced games under their CLASSIC 2.99 range. Each game has been carefully selected because in its day it was a smash hit. Now the growing collection can be yours at a super low price, and each month there will be a fifth classic title ABSOLUTELY FREE to CRASH readers who buy all four games in the month's offer !



JASPER

This is a twenty-two screen arcade adventure which includes platforms and *Jet Set Willy* type ropes as well as a host of nasties to avoid. You play the part of Jasper, super mouse extraordinaire and have to scamper round collecting objects in order to complete the game and travel through all the screens. Awarded a CRASH Smash back in November 84, this game was written by Derek Brewster . . . you know, the fellow who writes about adventure for us.



CODENAME MAT

Derek Brewster's massive space war adventure was deservedly Smashed at 93% back in May 84. Strategy, quick thinking and consummate arcade skills are required to master your space fighter and counter the Myon threat to humanity. The furious action takes place in the Solar System utilising amazingly sophisticated 3D, hardly bettered since. Complexity of options and the depth of the game will ensure that it is played for a long time — assuredly one of THE classics!



Copies of the latest releases from THE EDGE up for grabs!

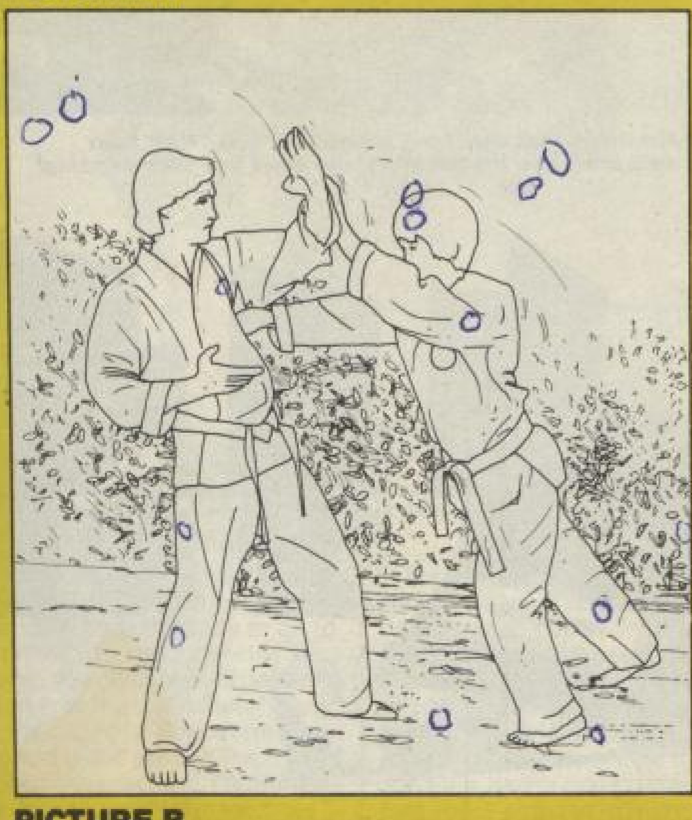
TRAVEL SHAO LIN's ROAD AND WIN A KUNG FU SUIT!

Learn the Mysteries of the Shao-Lin Temple!

Crash Competition



PICTURE A



PICTURE B

Sometimes I feel as if I'm in a computer game. . . .

There I was, stealing a quick forty winks in the broom cupboard, well away from the nasty noise of the ZZAP! office and the pongs of Girlie perfume from the CRASH den. All was quiet and I was starring in my favourite dream: I turn into a six-foot tall, fourteen-stone Kung Fu expert and wreak my revenge on all who have offended me at CRASH Towers. Anyway, it was just getting to the good bit where I'm about to throw Graeme Kidd into the river Ludd and there was an awful pounding on the cupboard door. Before I knew what was going on, Auntie Aggie had me trapped in her vice-like grip and was propelling me towards the door. My head was reeling. What hideous fate had she planned for me? After delivering a quick kick to my posterior, she ordered me to cart several large and very heavy looking packages up endless flights of stairs to the hallowed ones Up In Art.

It's at times like this that I often wish I was in a computer game. Especially one like THE EDGE's new release *Shao-Lin's Road*. Yes, I can see it all now as I bound effortlessly through the building, defeating opponents in my path with expertly delivered Kung Fu kicks. Just like the character in *Shao-Lin's Road*. No-one is safe from Grand Master Comps Minion as I hack and kick my way up to the Art Room!

Anyway, while we're on the subject of *Shao-Lin's Road* those very nice people at THE EDGE want to give away some prizes in honour of their new game, the official ocnversion of Konami's arcade machine, *Shao-Lin's Roads*. All you have to do is study the two pictures of Kung Fu fighters Ian Craig's drawn here, and spot as many differences between them as you can. Circle the differences in Picture B with your biro, fill in the entry form and whisk it off to **KUNG FU MINION, CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB** making sure it arrives by 20th November.

The first all-correct entry pulled out of Graeme's special Martial Arts Doc Marten wins the sender a Kung Fu suit, just like the one in the piccy, together with a copy of a book which explains the mysteries of the ancient Shao-Lin temple. This mystical place of worship was maintained by monks who defend it against barbarian hordes — the book is packed with information on the temple itself and explains Shao-Lin Kung Fu. But there's more! The winner also gets the choice of one of the following EDGE programs which will be released between now and Christmas: *Shao-Lin's Road*, *Manta* a shoot 'em up, *Fairlight II* and *Artist II*.

Fifteen more winners collect a copy of the Shao-Lin's Temple book and the choice of one of the above products; then thirty five runners up get the chance to choose a game from the same list!

NAME José Noya

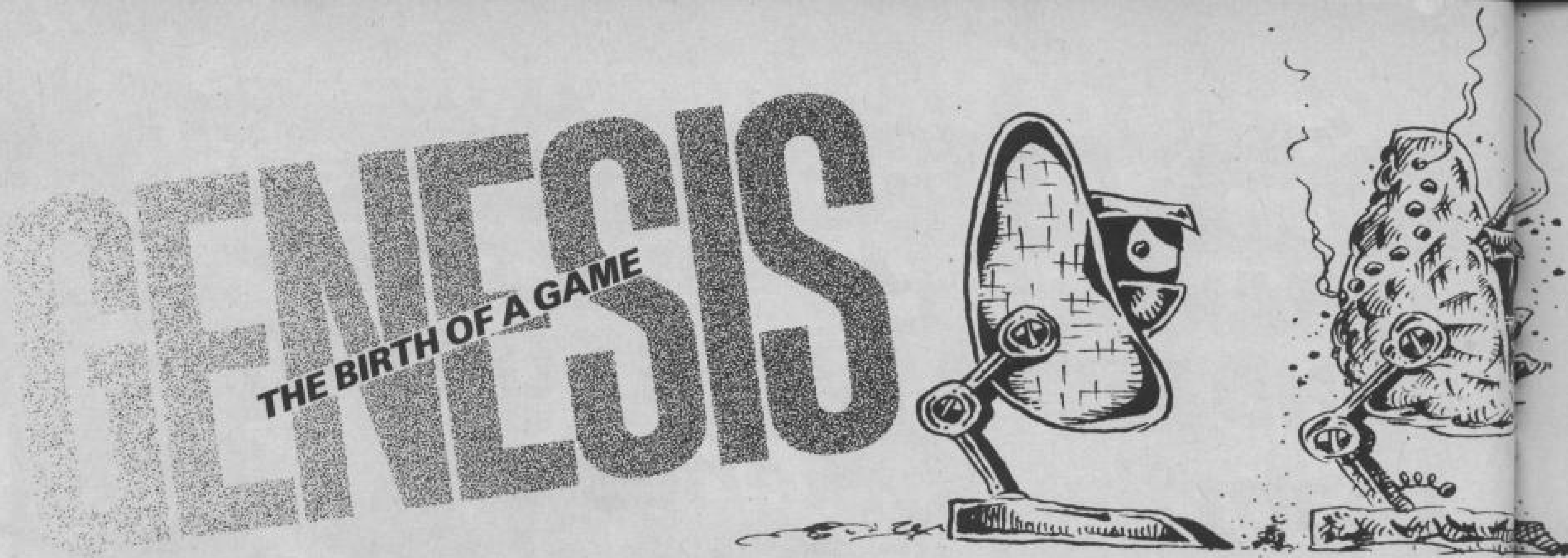
ADDRESS 174 ST Mary's Ave

HAILSHAM E. SUSSEX

POST CODE BN27 2JP

IF I WIN, I'D LIKE TO HAVE THIS EDGE RELEASE (Tick One)

- [x] Shao-Lin's Road
- [ ] Manta
- [ ] Fairlight II
- [ ] Artist II



THE MARKETING MIX . . .

September was a busy month for Jonathan Eggelton, designer of the first GENESIS game. Not only was he working on the game graphics for Graham Stafford, but he also went to DOMARK's HQ for a briefing on how the game would be taken to the marketplace. And a trip to Ludlow had to be fitted in to discuss the inlay artwork with Oliver Frey. Meanwhile, there's a full preview of KAT-TRAP on page 66 . . .

THE PUBLISHER'S TALE . . .

DOMARK's founders and joint managing directors, Dominic Wheatley and Mark Strachan come from a marketing background — the duo met while they were working at a London advertising agency. They entered the home computer industry some three years ago, bringing a certain marketing flair with them — all their games have been launched and promoted in an original and strong way.

A great deal goes on behind the scenes before a finished program arrives in the High Street shops — and there's much more to the process than just booking a few ads, duplicating the cassettes and waiting for orders to flood in. There's the Public Relations side of things to deal with — spreading the word about a product without actually buying advertising space. Someone has to take care of liaison with the editorial staff working on computer magazines, newspapers, radio and, if the game's very lucky, television. Like a lot of companies in the software industry, DOMARK pays for the services of a Public Relations (PR) firm to do all sorts of useful things that help the game get into the public eye.

DOMARK's PR firm is called INTER-MEDIATES, and it was the cuddly Dave Carlos, INTER-MEDIATES bossman who collected Jonathan Eggelton and his mum Margaret from Milton Keynes and drove them to Wimbledon for the first marketing meeting. PR companies do ". . . all sorts of useful things . . ."!

Jonathan admitted that he'd never really thought about the way a computer program actually gets into the shops, so **Mark Strachan** set about explaining the process. Essentially, there are half a dozen elements to the process of marketing a game: setting the price; arranging for the artwork for promotional material; designing the packaging; setting up an advertising budget and strategy; arranging for distribution of the product and of course, the PR side of things.

"*All these element are interrelated,*" Mark explained, "*and the first thing Dominic and I do when we have a finished game on our hands is sit down together and go through the marketing plan. Then we have to think about the commercial side of things — at the end of the day, everyone's got to make money out of a product. Perhaps the first consideration is the price, because the price that is charged in the shops affects the amount of money we have available to promote the game.*"

When you actually buy a game in the shop, paying £7, £10, or maybe even £15, have you ever stopped to wonder why so much is charged for what is, after all, then than £1's worth of materials? Lloyd's postbag is usually brimming with letters complaining about the price of software — let Mark Strachan explain where the money goes:

"*Say we decide to charge £7.95 for Kat-Trap. Over half the retail price goes to the shops, so that leaves about £3.00 for DOMARK. Out of that £3.00 we've got to pay for the box, the tape, labels, duplication and assembly costs — someone has to put the package together. Actually making the physical product which is sold in the shops could cost £1. That leaves us with £2*

"*Out of that £2 we have to pay for advertising and promotion, which could easily eat up half of the money remaining, and then there are the royalties that have to be paid to the programmer.*"

Buying advertising space in computer magazines gets expensive very quickly. A full-page, colour advertisement in CRASH, for instance, costs about £1,000 and that's not the highest price in the



Oli and Jonathan chat about the artwork for KAT-TRAP. Next month, we'll bring you the full story and show you Oli's painting!



Just a selection of the packaging alternatives available. And of course, there's always the possibility of designing and making a special box for a game. KAT-TRAP is likely to appear in a standard DOMARK library case, like SPLITTING IMAGES . . .

industry . . . In working out how much money to spend on advertising, the problem is, you don't actually know how many copies of the game are going to sell. If a £7.95 price tag is decided upon for a game and at least 10,000 units sell, according to Mark's breakdown of costs DOMARK could budget to spend about £10,000 on advertisements. That's a lot of money — you could buy a very nice car or maybe a small house with such a sum . . . Why is it important?

"Advertising does many things," Mark explains, "*it informs people that your product is available, it gives the selling price and tells people where they can get the product. You need to tell people that they must have your product, but not tell them too much. In the software business, advertising makes the difference between a real success and an 'also ran'.*

"*Apart from the consumer advertising, which is aimed at the end user, there's the trade advertising to be taken care of too. The people involved in the distribution and retail side of the trade are very different — we can advertise to customers easily. We also need to tell the shops about a game — we have to tell a little story in a way, explaining why people are going to come in and buy it. It helps to have quotes from magazines, and it's useful to explain our consumer advertising and promotion plans as well. We'll probably take advertisement space in COMPUTER TRADE WEEKLY, which circulates to people in the home computer industry, and produce some A4 'flyers' — leaflets which tell the retailer about our game, explain why it is going to sell and aim to persuade him to stock copies.*"

Once an advertising budget has been set, bookings have to be made with the publications — and everything has to be planned carefully, because publishers need to know in advance who wants to take advertising space in an issue of a magazine. Advertisements that appear in this issue of CRASH for instance, were booked before the middle of September and had to arrive in Ludlow, ready to go to the printers, before the end of September. You can't always get an advert in at the last minute!

"*In the case of a Spectrum/Amstrad game like* Kat-Trap, *we'd usually take space in* CTW *and ten or a dozen consumer magazines*", Mark says, "*and we have to decide how we're going to spend the money across the publications. We never advertise a product until it's ready — it just confuses customers.*" And wastes their time — Lloyd has quite few letters from people who've seen a game advertised and spent time and money going to the shops looking for it . . .

The packaging is an important part of the 'marketing mix'. Shelf space in High Street stores costs the retailer quite a lot of money, and shopkeepers want to make the best possible use of the display space they have available. Some large retail chains lay down the sizes for computer game boxes — and if you don't comply with their standard sizes, your game simply doesn't get onto their shelves. It all has to be borne in mind . . .

"*We've got two alternatives when it comes to packaging,*" Mark says, fetching some examples of previous DOMARK games, "*we can use our standard cassette library case — the one used for* Splitting Images, *or we can produce a special box as we did for* Eureka! *and* Trivial Pursuit. *The problems with special packs are that they can't be recycled, they're more expensive and they have to be specially made, which takes longer. Our standard case fits in with the requirements of Boots, WH Smiths and so on, yet stands out a little bit, so we'll probably use the library case for* Kat-Trap."

The artwork used on the inlay and for advertisements and posters has to be commissioned and prepared in time to meet up with printers' schedules. Advertisements need to be similar, if not identical, to the packaging and the logo and artwork are crucially important to the whole process of marketing a game. As well as being written and published by some of the top people in the industry, *Kat-Trap* is getting off to a good start on the artwork front — Jonathan has been working on ideas for the central character for months, and is a keen artist. And Oli has agreed to paint the picture that will be used. More of that, a little later . . .



A quick tutorial on airbrush techniques from Oli. RULE ONE: open the window before spraying that niffy orange ink that smells as if someone's thrown up!

Mark has nearly finished explaining the work DOMARK will be doing for *Kat-Trap*: "*Once the product has been advertised and manufactured, the final stage is to arrange the distribution. We haven't got the time or the facilities to deal with all the shops that sell software, and our customers are in fact about a dozen in number — they are the distributors and large chain stores.*

"*We have to ring up, make an appointment and go and tell them about a game, giving them details of the advertising budget and the reviews we've had, if any. It's not an easy task — last year, for instance, Smiths were offered 1,500 games and actually took 75 of them!*

"*Orders have to be secured and then, the day before the launch, we have to ship games to distributors. Every customer of ours MUST get the game on the same day — everyone wants to get their hands on the product immediately. In fact, the same day isn't good enough — we've found it has to be the same hour. A shopkeeper usually deals with more than one distributor and if he wants copies of a new game, he'll approach one distributor — if that distributor hasn't received the game and can't supply immediately, the shopkeeper will go to another distributor. To avoid the bad feeling this causes, we hired twelve vans to take* Trivial Pursuit *to our twelve customers and we told the drivers to wait outside the warehouses until noon before actually going in and making the delivery.*

"*Once they've got the product, distributors ring round the shops they supply, selling the game in for us, and all we have to do is sit back and wait for the phone calls from distributors, asking for more supplies . . . If the game is a hit, we'll get several calls a day from each distributor and that's very nice!*"

In many respects, the customer has got the easy job — okay, you've got to find the £7.95 from somewhere, but all you have to do is go into the shop and buy the game. It takes a long time for DOMARK or any other software publisher to see their share of your money, however. The shopkeeper puts your money into his bank account that evening and then has to pay the distributor — usually within 60 days. That's three months. Then the distributor has to pay the publisher — which can take even longer. But of course the publisher has to pay printer's bills, advertising bills and the costs of actually producing and shipping the cassette. When Jonathan went to see DOMARK, in the middle of September, over a million pounds was riding on *Trivial Pursuit* — *publishing software certainly isn't trivial!*

THE PR PERSPECTIVE

After lunch at burger bar overlooking the home of the Wombles, it was back to the offices and time for Dave Carlos to explain his role in the marketing of a game. Dave used to be the editor of HOME COMPUTING WEEKLY, and so thoroughly understands the way computer magazines work. This helps him a lot when it comes to liaising with the computer press . . . He's been involved with the GENESIS project right from the start, liaising between CRASH, DESIGN DESIGN and DOMARK.

PR work starts months before the launch of a game. "We get involved with the marketing plan," Dave explains, "*and have to work out how to tell the media in general that a game is on its way. Television, newspapers, Micronet, magazines and of course European publications all have to be informed.* DOMARK *is one of the clients we provide a PR service for, and in their case we get involved right at the start. We can spend days, or even weeks thinking about the ways in which we can actually present a new game to the press. A launch party could be held at an interesting place that has a connection with the game, for instance — in the case of* View To A Kill *the game was launched at Pinewood studios and journalists were invited to a screening of the film that took place a week before the Royal Premiere.*

"*It is the PR company's job to provide backup to the publisher and deal with journalists. We have to arrange for photographs to be taken and supplied to magazines, and have to come up with interesting ideas that will get people talking about the product — the aim is to reinforce the message that the product is NEW!*

"*When a game is getting close to launch, it's time to start thinking about promoting it through competitions — the PR side is very different to advertising. We spend time thinking about crazy ideas and then seeing if we can actually do them — for TP, a solid gold Trivial Pursuit set is being made and will be given away as the prize in a national competition. For the next Bond game, we investigated the possibility of setting up a photo session with Mark and Dominic and some alligators, but the whole idea turned out to be too expensive.*" (Relief washes across Mark's face at this point!)

Dave Carlos is given a budget to work with, and has to allocate cash for competition prizes and cover other launch expenses such as the hire of a venue and the food and drinks bill for Hunter S Minson and his friends! A good rapport with magazines and customers is important to a software publisher, and Dave works for a number of clients as an intermediary, in effect. He takes care of all the administrative work involved in sending out press releases, arranging photographs, holding a launch party and inviting the right people, sorting out promotional products like badges, T-shirts and hats, and ultimately, presenting the game to magazines.

"*With* Kat-Trap *Mark and I will try to see all the magazine editors personally, taking the game with us and demonstrating it. It's just possible to cover all fifteen magazines in London, visiting each of them, in a single day but it's not the best way to do things — it's very tiring and hard work!*

"*And the final part of the PR company's job is to be on the end of a telephone sorting out queries and problems. If a journalist wants to know the price of a game, the name of the author or the age of the designer, it's up to me to pass on the information quickly and efficiently.*"

KAT-TRAP — A GENUINELY EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!

**Well, *Kat-Trap* is the GENESIS game after all . . .
Last month we reported on the way Graham Stafford planned to implement Jonathan's design. Then, only the bare skeleton of the game had been assembled but Graham and Jon have been beavering away and *Kat-Trap* is moving, and ready for a preview. With the delays involved in producing CRASH, by the time you read this, the game should be finished!**

It is the 24th century and Earth has been abandoned by the human race for two centuries — solar explosions forced a huge evacuation. Now, the Earth people deem it safe to return to their home planet. However, when they arrive they face a shock for although the planet itself seems to have survived quite well, squatters have moved in. Mother Earth has been taken over by the Cat Men!

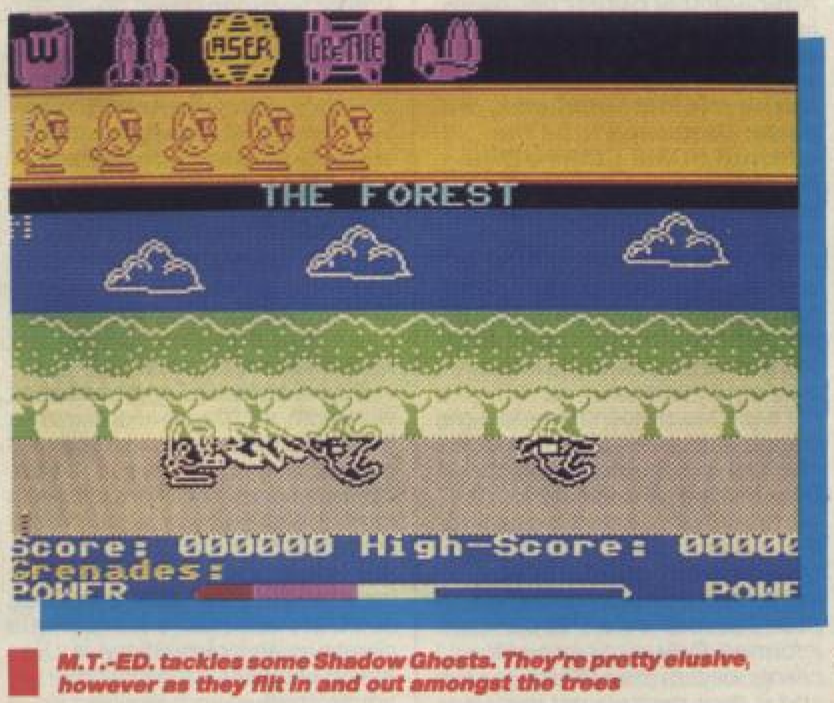
The World leaders want their planet back, but there's no point pottering off to the County Court for an eviction order — the Cat Men aren't going to give up without a fight. From enforced exile the Earth men hatch a plan. They send down a sophisticated Multi Terrain Exploration Droid, affectionately known at M.T.-ED. He's not really a combat droid — M.T.-ED. was designed to potter over awkward terrain and maybe get involved in a bit of scrub clearance, but fighting . . . well, it's not really his forte. A few weapons are bolted on to M.T.-ED. and he's sent down to Earth along with Hercules-1, a maintenance and command droid. A reluctant hero, M.T.-ED. sets out to oust those unwelcome Cat Men for good.

At the moment two screens are nearly complete — the ruined city and the forest area. In Jonathan's original game plan there are fourteen levels, ranging from lakes, deserts, mountain peaks, and castles. And Graham Stafford reckons all these levels will be included in the finished game . . .

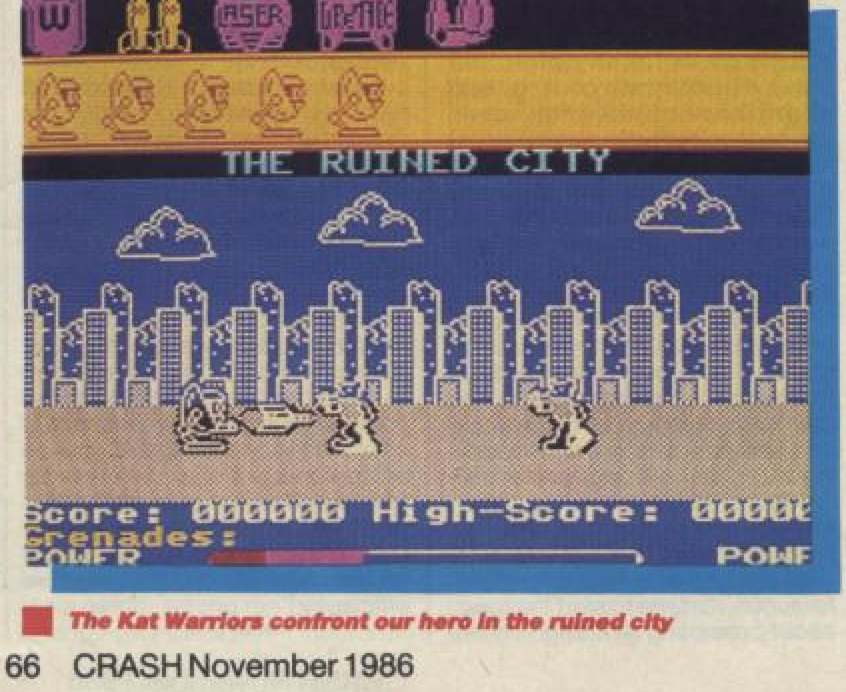
Apart from the ravenous Cat Men who are possessively guarding ''their'' planet, other nasties have to be dealt with. Ghost-like shadow men drift in and out of the forest areas and Mechno Cats roam around chewing up anything daft enough to get in their way. A sinister sewer beast grabs at victims from manholes and all manner of undesirables have joined forces with the Cat Men. Points are scored for all the baddies blasted to their doom.

M.T.-ED. moves around by scurrying along or by taking a series of bouncy hops — even in the game's present embryonic state he sproings around in a very convincing mechanical way. To defend himself against the dangers, M.T.-ED. has a variety of weapons at his disposal. However, not all these are effective against all of the invaders. Water cannon, missiles, a powerful laser, grenades and bullets should all be available in the finished game — the heroic droid must stomp through each successive level eradicating the dangers that meet him and selecting the correct weapon for each type of baddie he meets.

Although the work on the game has progressed a great deal from the last time it was viewed, there is still quite a bit more to do. Changes will probably be made to the scenario and structure right up until the last minute. But you'll have to wait until next issue, when we'll have a full review before you'll know the whole story. . . .

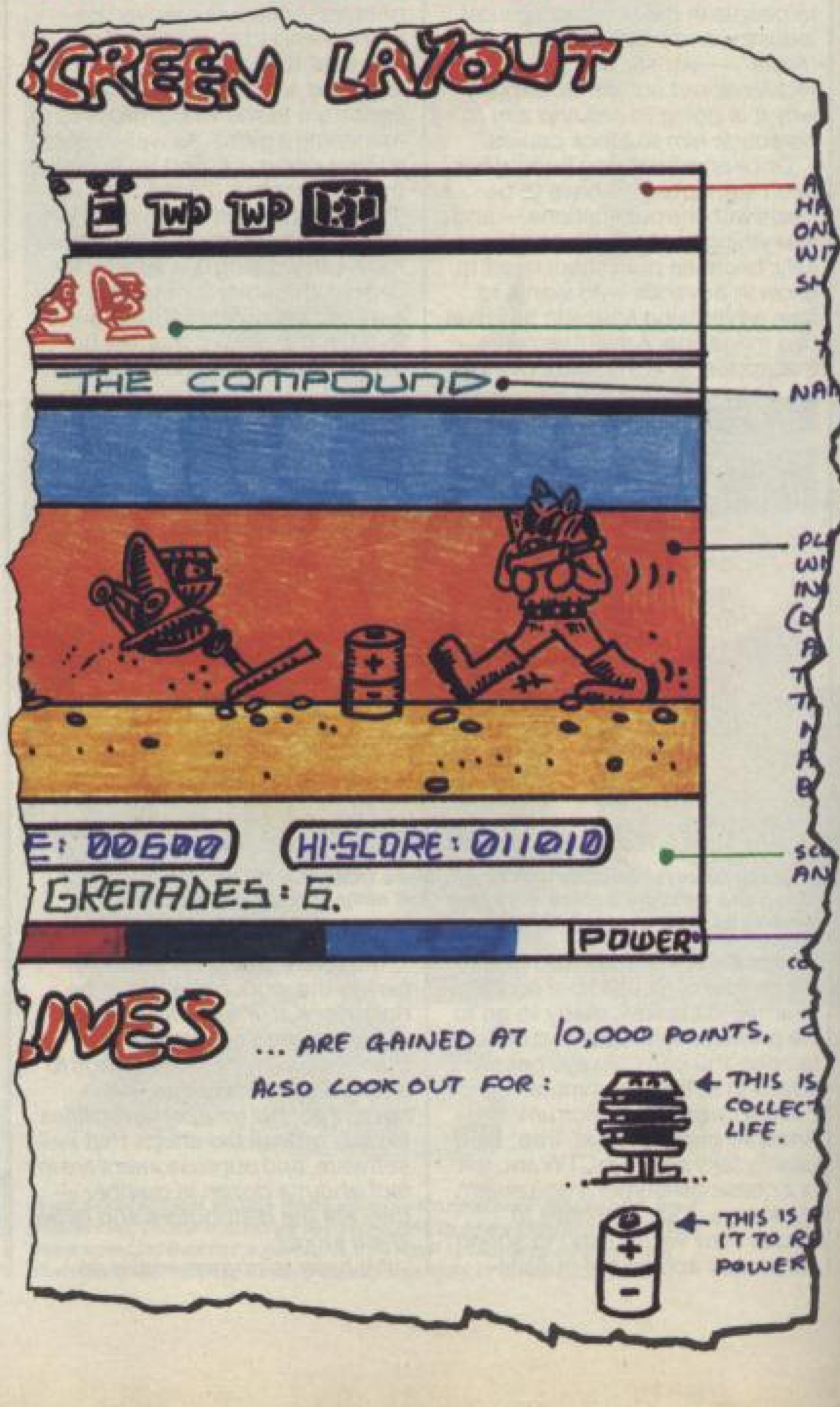


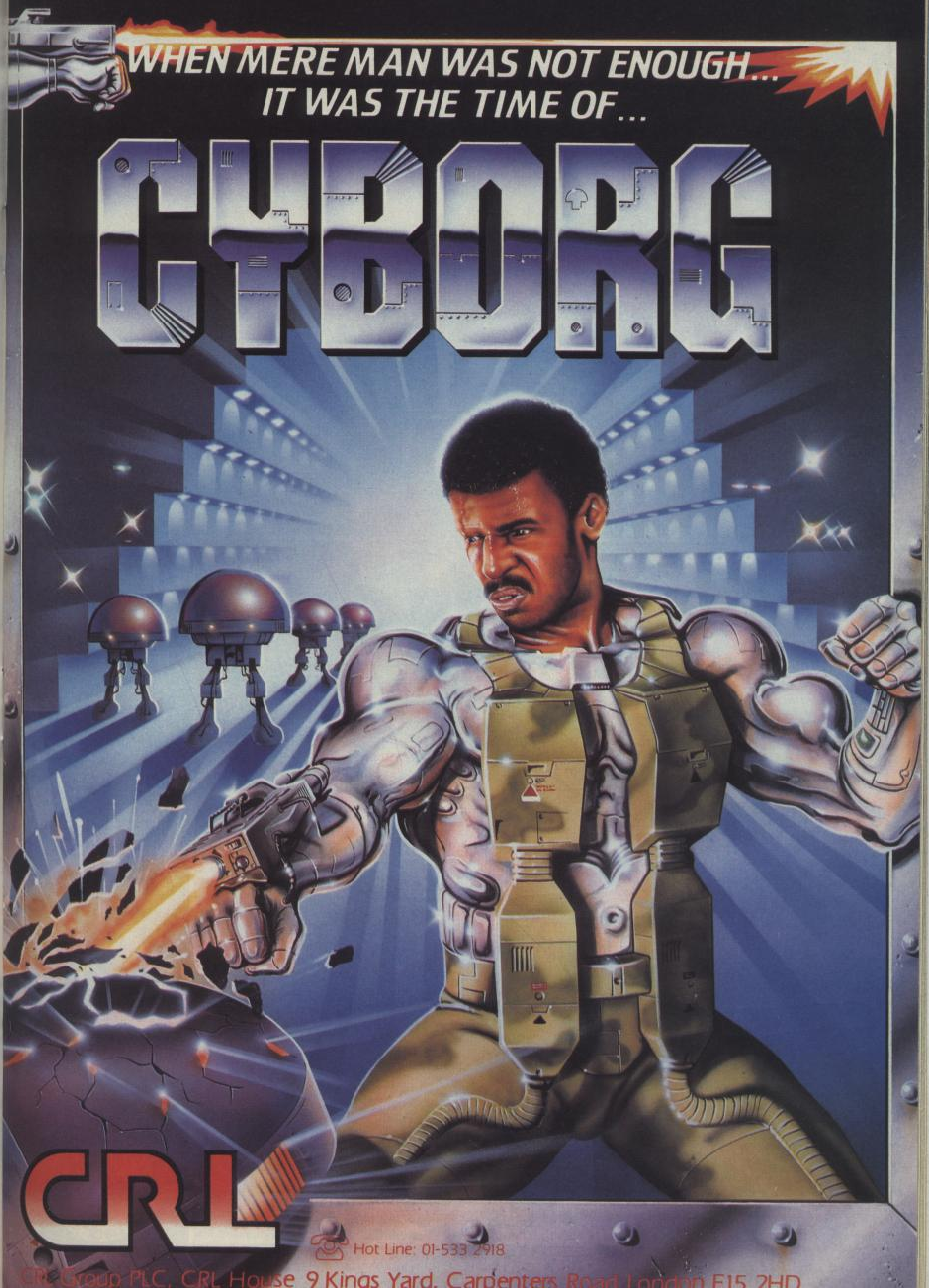
M.T.-ED. tackles some Shadow Ghosts. They're pretty elusive, however as they flit in and out amongst the trees



The Kat Warriors confront our hero in the ruined city

The original screen design from Jonathan's GENESIS entry. Mr Stafford's keen to keep as close as he can to the original brief, as you can see from the screenshots . . .




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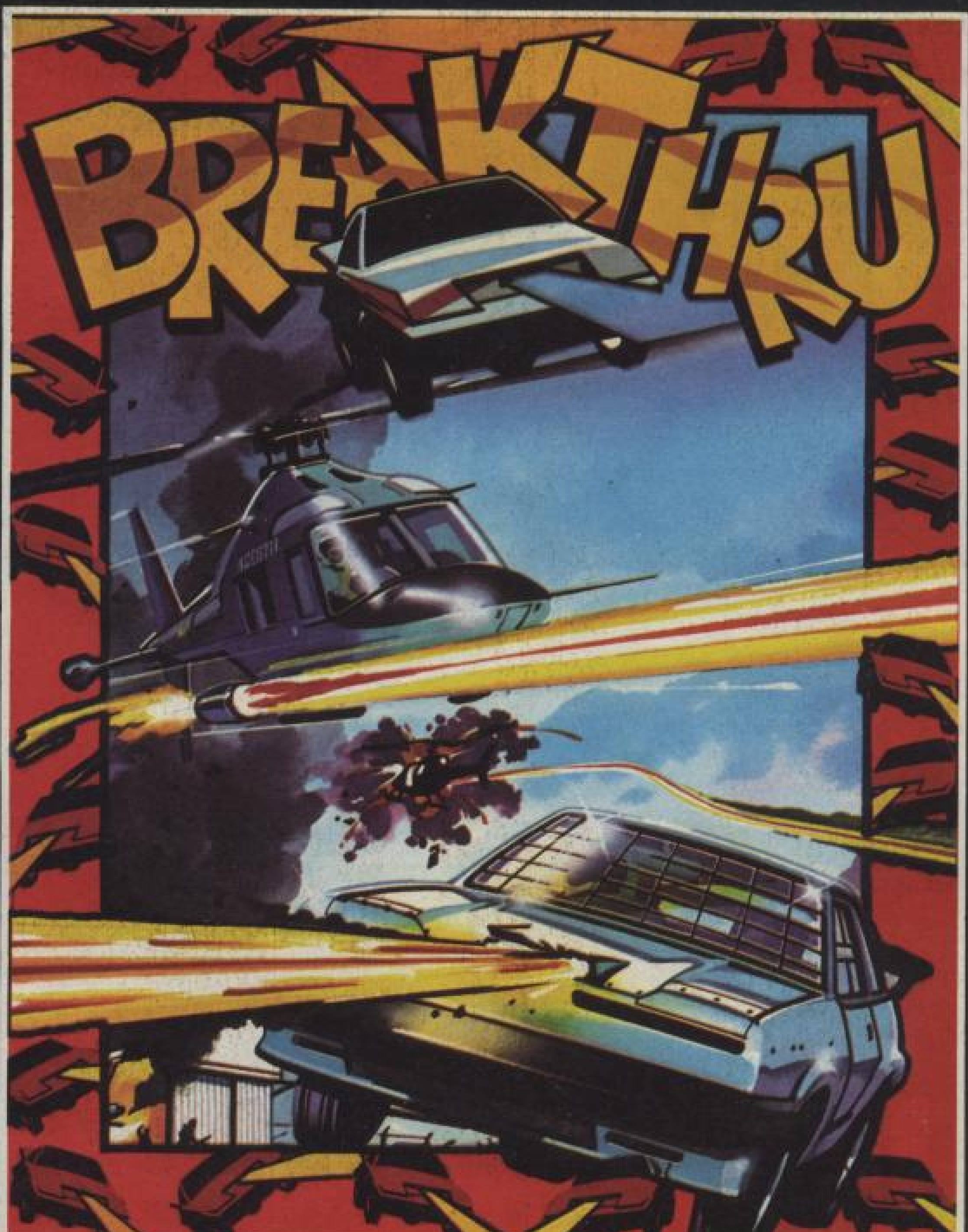
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FIGHT BACK WITH UCHI MATA!
SELF-DEFENCE FOR NO EXPENSE!

A Minion's Life is not a happy one as I'm sure you all know by now. A while ago I decided to learn some self-defence techniques to protect myself from the dreaded Doc Martened One and that awful Girlie tipster — they're always doing horrible things to me in the CRASH office. That Hannah Smith has been really aggressive ever since the Girlie Challenge with Molasses Ravenflame. I put it down to all that wrestling training she got from Lolita Loren a while back.

Anyway, in order to defend myself from that terrible twosome, I have taken up the ancient art of Judo. I go to evening classes twice a week to learn how to protect myself against danger. The only trouble is, I feel a bit daft in the Judo suit I have to wear — Graeme and Hannah are always teasing me about it.

I feel slightly less self-conscious about the whole thing at the moment because I've been told about BRIAN JACKS' (Judo Superstar) appearance at the PCW show (I didn't go — as usual I had to stay in Ludlow and keep Lloyd company while everyone else nipped off to the bright lights of London Town). Apparently Mr Jacks was taking on challengers from the audience and looked very macho in his judo outfit. But what is all this in aid of I hear you cry? It's all to do with the new game from MARTECH called *Uchi Mata*. The idea of the game is to generally bully your opponents into submission using all sorts of special JUDO moves (which I haven't learnt yet because I'm not very good). Moves like the UCHI MATA after which MARTECH's game has been named.

MARTECH are offering copies of the Spectrum version of *Uchi Mata* for the first fifty correct entries to this competition. MARTIAL ART afficiandos (LMLWD) should do well . . . And not only that but the kind Mr Jacks has autographed each copy! Find the following words in the word square, complete the coupon and whisk your entry off to **UCHI MATA COMPETITION, PO BOX 10 CRASH TOWERS, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB.** Make sure your entry arrives by 20th November if you want to stand a chance of winning

U	C	H	I	J	K	L	S	B	A	C	H
M	L	R	U	U	Q	T	A	R	T	M	C
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R	R	Z	Z	D	E	B	D	I	Q	G	K
A	Y	C	H	L	M	P	F	X	O	O	O
M	V	X	J	V	E	W	P	P	D	X	B
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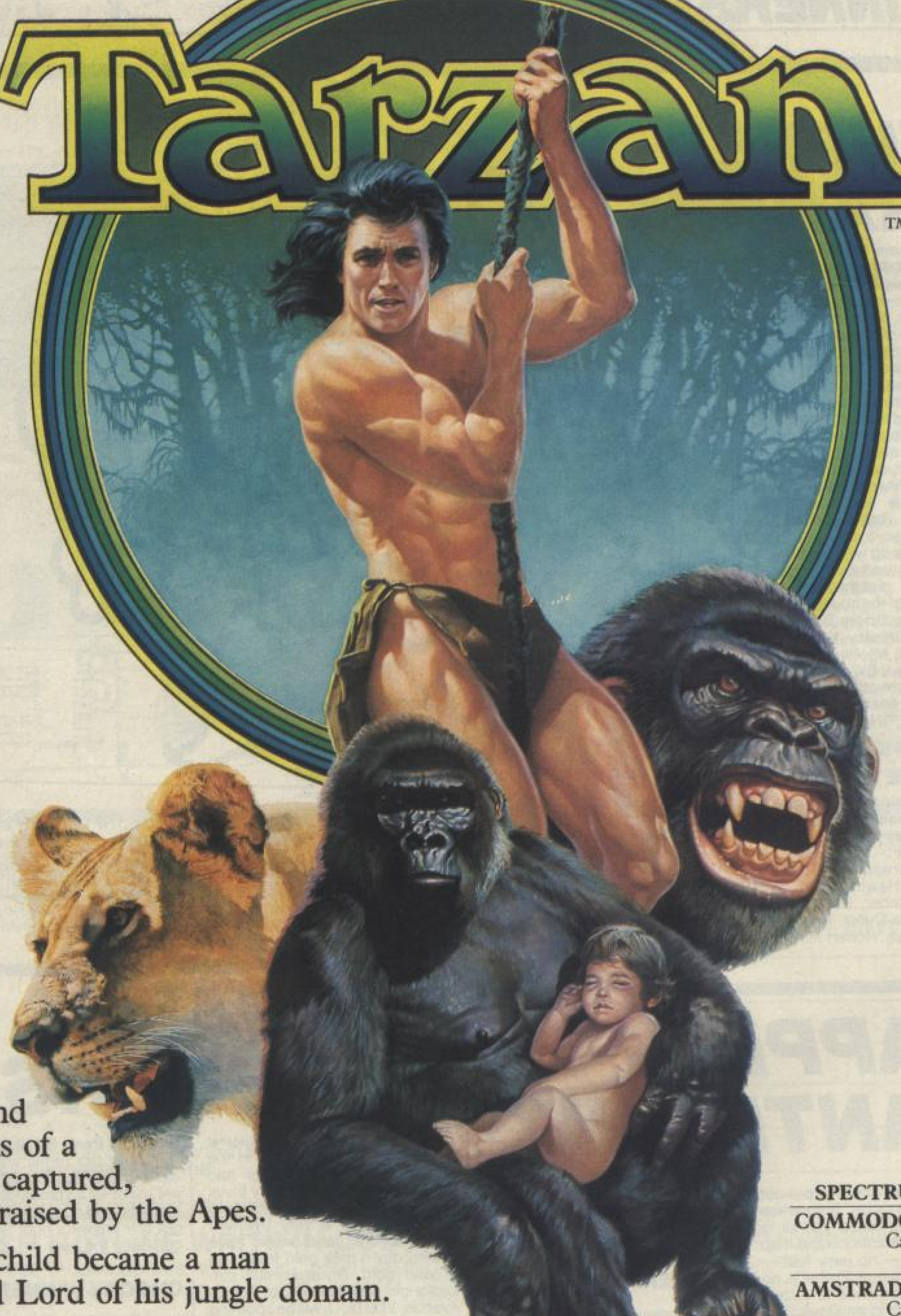
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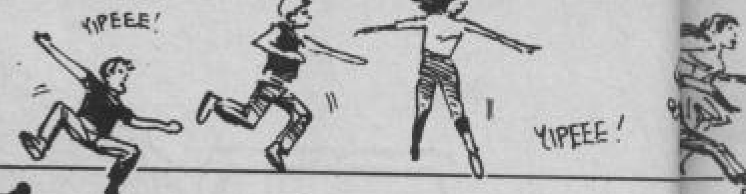
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WINNERS & PRIZES



STUFFED PIRANHAS



A new software label swam out from MACMILLAN not so long ago, and two issues back there was a little celebration in honour of PIRANHA. The idea was to put together the scenario for a mini Spectrum game starring a piranha. **Oliver Collins** of Chetwynd Road, NW5 1DG won first prize with his hero who spits razor-sharp teeth to great effect, as you can see in the picture. He receives a bulging goody bag containing a PIRANHA sweatshirt, a cuddly fish and all the forthcoming PIRANHA games: *Nosferatu, Rogue Trooper, Strike Force Cobra, Trap Door* and *The Colour of Magic*.

Five runners up will also be very happy (now, won't you!) with a T shirt, cuddly piranha and their choice of one of the above games. **Iain Charlton, Briery Bank, LA5 0DY; J E Le Gresley, Kenilworth Rd, PO5 2PG; Michael S Jones, Klea Avenue, SW4 9HG; Ian Durston, Eastwood Close, TA6 4DX; Luke Gietzen, Orchard Close, SE23 3QN**

CUDDLY PIRANHA AND GAME WINNERS

Yet more fabric fish, with one of the five games, will be swimming their way towards the following people:
R Deaper, Warwick Rd, Cumbria; Peter Walsh, Hawthorn Rd, M10 0RH; Iain Humber, Greenhill Rd, NG4 1DF; Leo Derici, Sunnyside Park, Cornwall; Robert King, St Gabriel's Lea, RG24 0RE; CJ Tiley, Dunster Rd, LE12 7HA;; Jason Slater, Warrens Way, TF7 5QD; David Fletcher, Freesia Close, S31 7JB; Sarah Regan, Beaufort Rd, SK2; T Kyriacos, Girdlestone Walk, N19 5DP; Alan Dexter, Sheffield Rd, S31 7DU; Matthew Bond, Hewish Rd, N18 1PS; Jeremy Alder, Sunnyside, OX4 2NW; Ian West, Challoners Hill, MK18 2PE; Jason McLaughlin, Dorothy Ave, TN17 3AN; Matthew Dolphin, Gibery Close, B93 9JZ; David Jackson, Landsmoor Drive, PR4 5PE; Ian Smith, Drayton Drive, SK8 3LF; Gavin Grice, Fletcher CLose, HP19 3UB; Kevin Curtin, Elmgrove, IV12 4SN; Alan Walton, Peel Close, BB2 3NG; Paul Emery, Dulverton Rd, SE9 3RH; Shaun Hill, Finlay Close, ME13 7SH; Emlyn Williams, Cliff Rd, SS9 2HJ; Leigh Hayes, Springfield Rd, DN33 3JG.

MAPPING MANTRONIX

It was 'rip some graph paper out of your maths book' time when PROBE SOFTWARE asked you all to potter through *Mantronix*and map your progress — no easy feat — and Funky Fergie at Probe is no meanie when it comes to prizes. He will be sending an Opus Disk Drive to master cartographer **Nicholas Hall** of Warwick Road, SS6 8UL. A trio of runners up will each receive a Fergie Fun Bag containing posters and limited edition T shirts. Could have done with a few more entries here, folks . . .

RUNNERS UP

Neil O'Brien, Seymour Ave, SM4 4RB; Colm Andrew, Besthill Cottages, SK14 6EP; Philip Markin, Westdale Lane, NG4 4FG.



TRIVIAL PURSUERS

Those cunning chaps at DOMARK were behind a real teaser in the September issue where you had to answer several incredibly trivial questions — the winner gets on to the shortlist for a very **UN**trivial prize. DOMINIC and MARK have melted down their gold teeth into a solid gold *Trivial Pursuit* set. Lucky old **Neil Harvey**, of Fourth Avenue, YO3 0UU, will be zooming down to London at DOMARK's expense as the CRASH representative in the play-off for that solid gold set.

Five runners up each get a copy of the Trivial Pursuit boardgame, but sadly, not the solid gold version. They are:
Jacquie Attwood, Aylsham Road, NR3 2HF; Jon Sendel, Selly Oak, S8 8DU; Robert Finlayson, Brentwood Drive, G53 7UJ; Philip Rankin, Pepper Lane, WN6 0PY; Gary Shepherd, Highbury Park, BA12 9JE.

Finally, ten other winners will each receive a box of TP after dinner mints — a yummy little box of morsels, and no, you don't have to get any answers right before you can open the box!

CHOCCY WINNERS

Robert Burgess, Middlefield Road, S60 3JH; C Flounders, Bedale Avenue, TS23 1AH; F Moore, Hollybank Close, S12 2BN; Christopher Reynolds, Bredhurst Road, ME8 0QX; Jason Mann, Gibbons Close, WD6 4TF; Jon Rose, Lion Road, West Sussex; Steven Johnson, Gosford Way, BN26 6DP; Rodney Tregale, Howard Avenue, SL2 1LB; D M Kitching, Epson Close, DA7 6DU; Javid Karim, Town Road, SG8 9ES.







PUMPKIN POSERS

The wizard PALACE SOFTWARE competition involved a few tasty questions about pumpkins. Well, you certainly displayed a very reasonable knowledge of the plump veggie, and the winner was decided by the tie-breaker. **P Roberts**, of Haslingden Close, AL5 3EW came up with the nickname CD (seedy, geddit?) for his pumpkin. He will receive the original *Cauldron II* oil painting with which to adorn his bedroom. Thirty readers who were all pipped to the post each receive a copy of PALACE's *The Sacred Armour of Antiriad.*

ANTIRIAD WINNERS

John Musk, Holmewood House School, Kent; J Ashton, Broomfield Avenue, NE28 9AE; W Owen, Milton Road, SN9 5JW; Richard Chiles, Stainburne Road, SK2 6BB; Jason Lindsay, Oakfield Road, L4 2QE; J V Pritchard, Troubridge Road, TR13 8DH; I M King, Foxyard Road, DY4 8BH; Ross Higgins, Halifax Road, PL27 7TG; Gareth Haynes, Farmbridge Close, WS2 0AJ; John Taylor, Melbourne Cottages, Norwich, NR2 2SW; Martin Wakely, Orson Leys, CV22 5RF; CRASH Reader, Hill Village Road, B75 5TN; K Grzesik, Flutts Lane, S60 5QZ; Shaun Somers, Hutcliffe Wood Road, S8 0EY; A Wooden, Brafferton Drive, TS23 3RR; Jan Rosehrig, Lakeside Court, LE7 9PY; Nicholas Hardy, Riverside Road, NG24 4RL; Aled Wynne Owen, Ridgway Street, CW1 4BY; Jamie Major, Chapman Road, DN35 7JP; Andrew Biswell, Cricketers Close, KT9 1NL; Richard Williams, Rayleigh Road, BS9 2AU; Mat Hook, Rocky Lane, B61 9HP; James Dee, Yatesbury, SN11 8YG; Paul Leiper, Minnoch Crescent, Scotland; R Conn, Butts Road, DN18 5JF; David Bone, Melrose Avenue, NE31 2JF; Tony Smith, Ritchie Road, BA22 8SH; Stuart Wardale, Field Lane, L10 0AG; David Penny, Laburnum Crescent, DE3 2GS; Andrew Hooper, Cole Road, BA10 0DA.

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My top five programs are:

TITLE	VOTE OUT OF TEN
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

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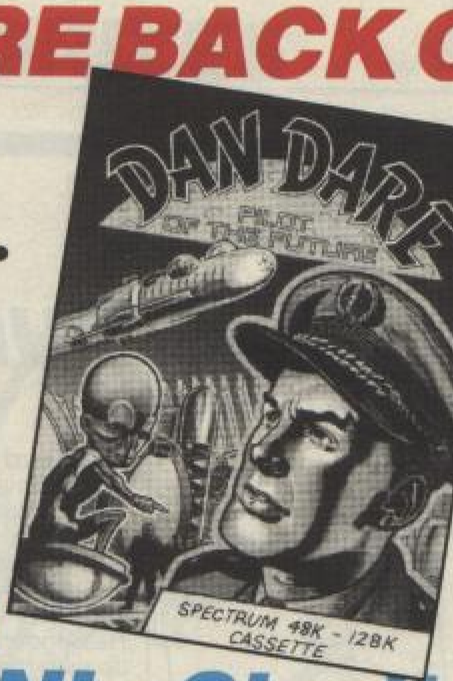
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My top five favourite programs in descending order are:

TITLE	PRODUCER
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PUT DAN DARE BACK ON COURSE N

Crash Competition



WIN! Copies of VIRGIN's Sizzling new game! Books, T Shirts, Videos/LP's and Posters up for grabs

So, you think you know a bit about Dan Dare eh? Reckon you could get him out of a scrape and back into action against the Mekon?

VIRGIN's excellent game featuring Dan Dare sends him on a mission to thwart evil Mekon's plans to blackmail Earth. The evil Green One has taken over an asteroid and set it in on a collision course with our home planet. Dan and his faithful assistant Digby set out in their trusty craft the Anastasia, planning to land on the Asteroid and do battle with the nasty green Treens. If Dan succeeds on his mission, and disables the Mekon's asteroid, Earth will once again be a safe and happy place in which to live, but should he fail. . . .

Our very own Oli used to draw Dan Dare strips before he helped to set up CRASH, and he simply couldn't resist the temptation to revisit an old friend with his airbrush. Oli was a bit pushed for time, as you can see, and didn't quite manage to complete the artwork for the series of cartoon frames that appear here.



AND COLLECT A HOST OF GOODIES!

Dan has suddenly run into a problem on his journey to the Mekon's hideout . . . Treen forces have intercepted the Anastasia, and Digby and Dan find themselves spinning down towards the hard surface of the Mekon's blackmail planetoid, out of control. It's up to you to finish the story and make sure that Dan lands safely so the game, programmed by the crew at VIRGIN, can go on.

What we want you to do is to complete the comic strip story . . . you can use whatever artistic materials you might have to hand, aided and abetted with a handful of talent. Complete the artwork and then turn your mind to the trio of tricky questions (well, not too terribly tricky) that appear on the entry form.

Complete the coupon and send it off to DAN DARE COMP, CRASH Towers, PO BOX 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB making sure your artwork and answers arrive before 20th November.

Lots of luvverly prizes are up for grabs — and there are TWO First prizes in this competition! The senders of the top two entries will collect a Poster, a Dan Dare T Shirt (one of a Limited Edition run, specially produced by VIRGIN), a copy of the game, a copy of the book *The Man Who Drew Tomorrow* — a biography of the man who created Dan Dare in the first place — and either three videos or five albums. (VIRGIN will send the two top prize winners catalogues so they can make their choice of videos or albums.)

A trio of runners-up are set to collect a copy of the game together with a Limited Edition T Shirt and poster, and then no less than twenty five lucky entrants are going to be receiving copies of this Sizzling game together with a poster.

QUESTIONY BITS:

1) What is the name of the artist who originally created Dan Dare?

....

2) In which comic did (and does) the Dan Dare strip appear?

....

3) From which planet did the Mekon and the Treens originate?

....

NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

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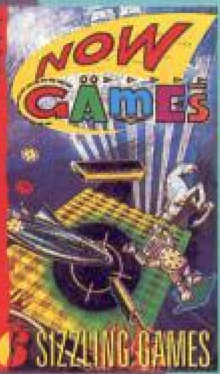
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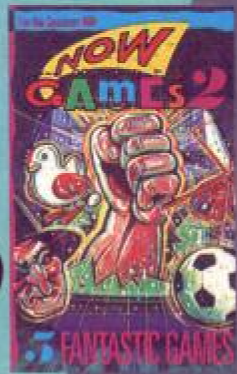
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PLAYING TIPS



Funny, the Sticker Wars that started at the PCW Show seem to have done the trick at last. Despite all sorts of threats and mutterings about ''ladylike'' behaviour, Ravingdame has turned out to be a really shallow, two-dimensional sort of character. Not a peep from her in print, on paper or via the phone. Hope the dear girl's not still stuck in the PCW Ladies! (Snigger)

Anyway . . . when I got back to Ludlow I just dumped all my carrier bags full of goodies in the office and went off for a good rest. Unpacking them the other day, I came across some spare *HANNAH SMITH* stickers that weren't actually used up in the great Sticker War. If you'd like a couple, send a SAE to me at GIRLY STICKERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB and I'll do my best to send you a little pressie in the post. Stick 'em on anyone you see reading ol' wimpout's pages for me, eh?

It's that happy time of the CRASH schedule for me again. Surrounded by heaps of playing tips, peaks of POKEs and reams of routines. Even after the mammoth tidy up of CRASH Towers last weekend my desk is still a shambles. Sigh. Anyway, before I go any further I must apologise for the cock up with the *Dynamite Dan II* POKEs. Luckily I've printed the correction this month so no more threatening letters please or I'll cry.

This month there's the final part of the *Equinox* map as well as two more islands from *Dynamite Dan II* sent in by Andrew Keeley and Paul Burchell from Eastbourne. *Hijack*, the cunning game from ELECTRIC DREAMS has been mapped by Andy Leates and R Walker from Haywards Heath, West Sussex. Their work should help you negotiate your way around the game and catch those nasty terrorists.

Stuart Middleton and Ray Tredoux from XCEL made a pilgrimage to Ludlow and brought me a superb *Universal Hero* map which graces the pages of Playing Tips this month. Robert Stevens drew a very pretty *Incredible Shrinking Fireman* map in case there are still some people who haven't finished it yet. There's an endless (well, almost) stream of POKEs, and lots more . . .

Cartographer of the month prize goes to Andy Leates and R Walker for their *Hijack* map and Top Tipster is Paul Forsyth from sunny Glasgow, who collects a prize for his *Dan Dare* solution. £20 worth of software will be on its way to you guys before you know it.

Anyway, enough of the waffle and on with the tips . . .

STAR FIREBIRDS Infinite Lives

The recently re-released *Star Firebirds* is certainly a brute to get through. If you're having trouble with worn away finger tips as you try to blast all the swooping and swirling alien craft, then take a POKE or two from the *Industrious Trio of Hackers from Haxby (and Pocklington)*, Chris Smith, Jason Bean and D Austin. Type this routine into your Spectrum, then RUN and you'll have infinite lives. Whoopie Doo!

```
10 REM C SMITH, J BEAN D
AUSTIN
20 REM STAR FIREBIRDS
POKES
30 LET TOT=0
40 FOR f=58594 TO 58637
50 READ a: LET TOT=TOT   a
60 POKE f,a: NEXT f
70 IF TOT <> 5753 THEN PRINT
''ERROR IN DATA''; BEEP 1,1:
STOP
80 PRINT #1; AT 1,3; ''START
STAR FIREBIRDS TAPE''
90 RANDOMIZE USR 1366
100 RANDOMIZE USR 58594
1000 DATA 221,33,203,92,17
1010 DATA 255,255,62,255,55
1020 DATA 205,86,5,62,195
1030 DATA 50,4,94,33,1
1040 DATA 229,34,5,94,175
1050 DATA 33,202,93,195,215
1060 DATA 93,175,50,239,190
1070 DATA 50,240,190,50,241
1080 DATA 190,195,187,205
```

V CHEAT

By typing in the following (rather long but it's worth it) program you'll be able to by-pass the door codes and formula code entries in OCEAN's *V*. Once again it's those Hackers from *Oopp North*, Jason Bean, Chris Smith and D Austin who are to blame. If 'blame' is the right way of putting it, that is . . .

```
10 REM C SMITH, J BEAN D
AUSTIN
20 REM V POKES
30 CLEAR 65535
40 RESTORE
50 LET TOT=0: LET w=1
60 FOR f=40000 TO 40159
70 READ a: LET TOT=TOT+w*a
80 POKE f,a: LET w=w+1
90 NEXT f
100 IF TOT <> 1672970 THEN
PRINT ''ERROR IN DATA'' :
BEEP1,1: STOP
110 PRINT # 1; AT 1,9; ''START
V TAPE''
120 RANDOMIZE USR 40000
1000 DATA
221,33,203,92,17,234,6,62
1010 DATA
255,55,205,86,5,48,241,243
1020 DATA
237,94,33,108,156,229,33,184
1030 DATA
98,229,51,51,17,193,252,1
1040 DATA
33,3,33,253,94,62,202,237
1050 DATA
79,195,184,98,33,134,156,229
1060 DATA
33,229,252,229,51,51,17,239
1070 DATA
252,33,239,252,1,243,2,62
1080 DATA
178,237,79,195,229,252,33,239
1090 DATA
252,17,193,138,1,92,0,237
1100 DATA
176,33,212,138,34,217,138,34
1110 DATA
221,138,33,202,138,34,229,138
1120 DATA
33,239,138,34,249,138,62,195
1130 DATA
50,13,139,33,180,156,34,14
1140 DATA
139,115,193,138,1,30,0,33
1150 DATA
194,156,17,126,255,237,176,115
1160 DATA
92,255,33,192,251,1,2,158
1170 DATA
17,0,245,237,184,175,50,226
1180 DATA
185,50,228,185,33,195,212,34
1190 DATA
158,192,62,192,50,160,192,0
```

NIGHTMARE RALLY

Here's a little hint from Richard Cowdery and Robert Moran who live in Hanworth, Middlesex for *Nightmare Rally*. If you'd like your Escort to go just that little bit faster, then here's what you do. When the game has loaded and the race has started, press SYMBOL SHIFT and Q simultaneously. Your car will now enter into Turbo Mode. You won't be able to crash (even if you try really hard). If you want to stop then SYMBOL SHIFT and W will do just that. How cute.

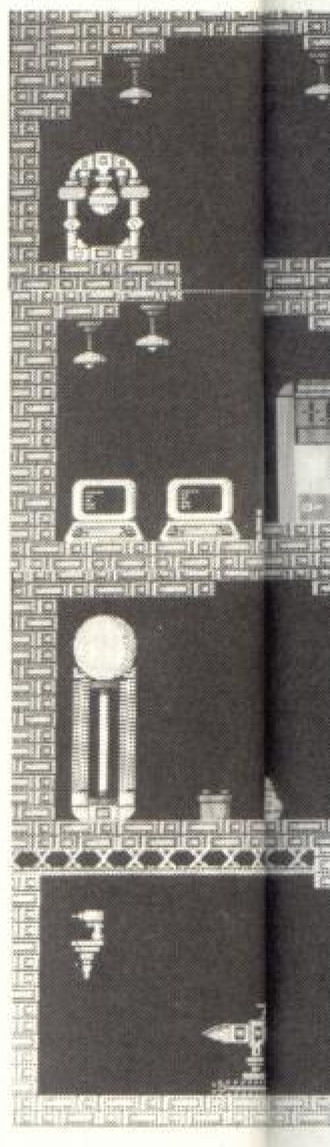
HEARTLAND POKEs

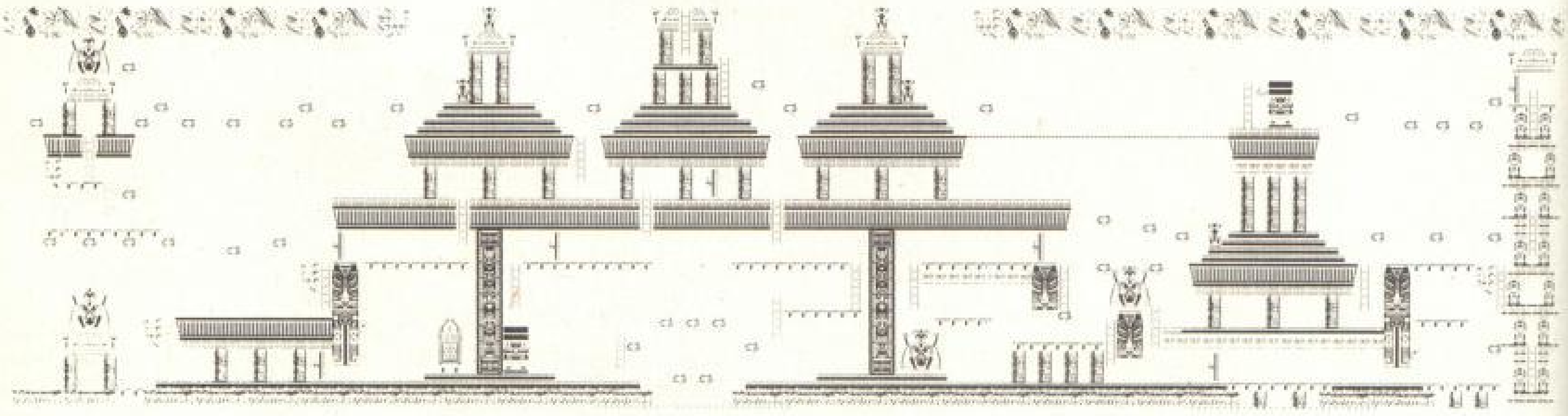
Phil Churchyard has been attacking some more games this month. *Heartland*, the game that involves chucking a top hat around at various nasties certainly seems to be giving people some serious gyp when it comes to getting through to the end, because I haven't received *any* tips at all on the game! If you are one of these people struggling through *Heartland* then despair no more. Thanks to me mate Phil, here's a routine to make you do all sorts of interesting things . . .

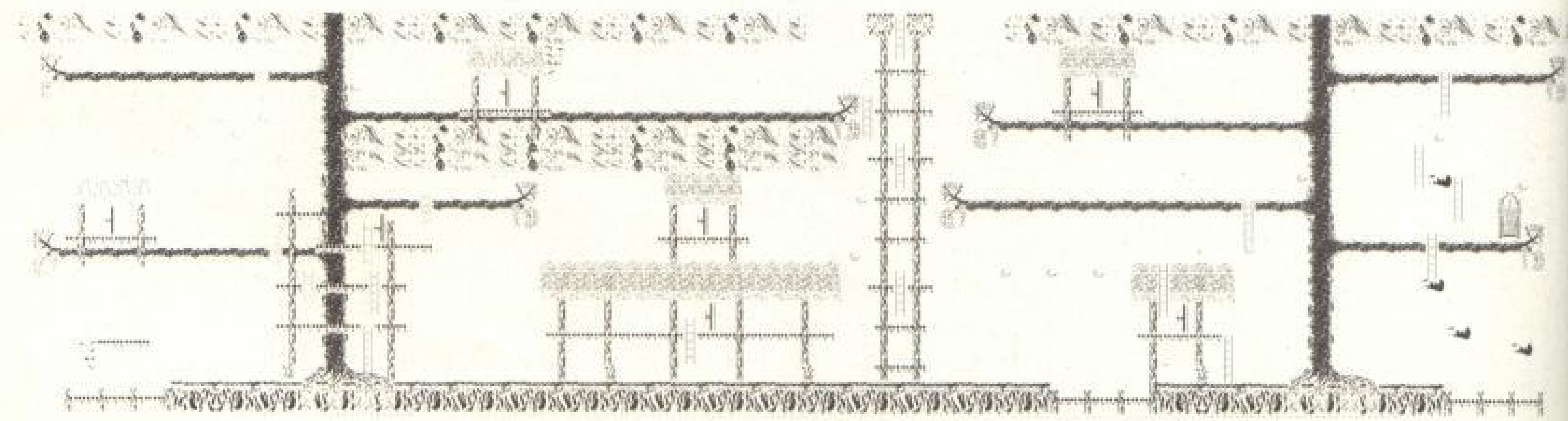
```
10 BORDER 0: INK 0: PAPER 0:
CLS: CLEAR 65399
20 RESTORE
30 LET TOT=0
40 LET WEIGHT=1
50 FOR i=65400 TO 65504
60 READ a: LET TOT=TOT+a*
WEIGHT+1
80 NEXT i
90 IF TOT<> 572787 THEN
PRINT# 1; ''ERROR IN DATA'':
BEEP 1,0:STOP
100 POKE 65475,167 (infinite
time)
110 POKE 65478,98 (infinite
energy)
120 PRINT #1; AT 0,6; ''START
TAPE''
130 RANDOMIZE USR 65400
1000 DATA 205,205,255,205
1010 DATA 255,42,83,92,17
1020 DATA 61,2,25,54,68
1030 DATA 35,35,35,54,84
1040 DATA 201,62,232,50,134
1050 DATA 232,62,169,50,137
1060 DATA 232,33,123,232,17
1070 DATA 0,128,1,150,3
1080 DATA 237,176,33,0,128
1090 DATA 34,176,232,33,177
1010 DATA 255,34,246,232,195
1110 DATA 169,232,33,191,255
1120 DATA 17,64,235,1,11
1130 DATA 0,237,176,195,22
1140 DATA 235,62,201,50,233
1150 DATA 0,50,94,0,195
1160 DATA 168,97,221,33,0
1170 DATA 91,175,17,17,0
1180 DATA 55,205,86,5,42
1190 DATA 83,92,221,33,0
1200 DATA 91,195,115,8,0
```

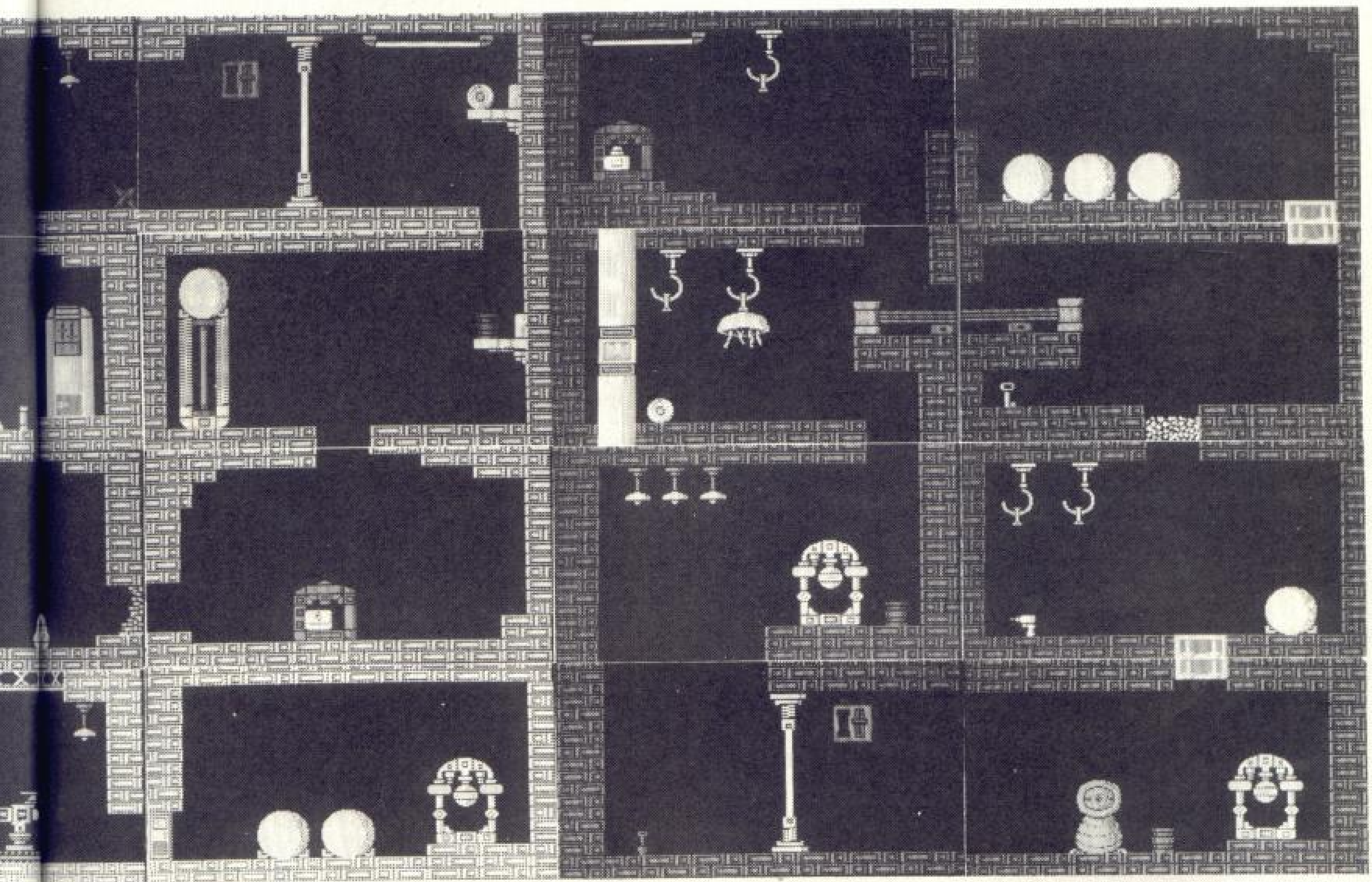
DYNAMITE DAN II

ITEM	APPEARANCE	FOUND ON	WORTH	ITEM	APPEARANCE	FOUND ON	WORTH
GOGGLES		ALL LEVELS	50 POINTS	SKULL		LEVEL 2	150 POINTS
BOMB		ALL LEVELS	50 POINTS	OXYGEN TANK		LEVEL 2	150 POINTS
FUEL	FUEL	ALL LEVELS	50 POINTS	RED GEM		LEVEL 2	150 POINTS
FOOD		ALL LEVELS	25 POINTS	SNAKE		LEVEL 3	150 POINTS
RECORD		ALL LEVELS	50 POINTS	MASK		LEVEL 3	150 POINTS
DESTROYING DOOR		ALL LEVELS	100 POINTS	MAGENTA LEAF		LEVEL 4	150 POINTS
DRILL		LEVEL 1	150 POINTS	CROSSBOW		LEVEL 4	150 POINTS
OUTBOARD MOTOR		LEVEL 1	150 POINTS	TORCH		LEVEL 1	150 POINTS









EQUINOX MAP LEVEL 5

EQUINOX CHEAT MODE

You surely can't still be having problems with *Equinox*, what with the HUGE map printed over the last two issues and the infinite lives POKEs published a couple of months back? However, I'm probably wrong, so here's a cheat courtesy of Andy Powell **from Sutton in Surrey.**

On level one find the red square with PETE written all over it. Take this cube back to the start of the game and using the lifts go to the top left hand corner and while thrusting upwards press RNC simultaneously and the game will pause for a second or two and when it resumes you will find that you now have infinite lives. Repeat this routine for each new game.

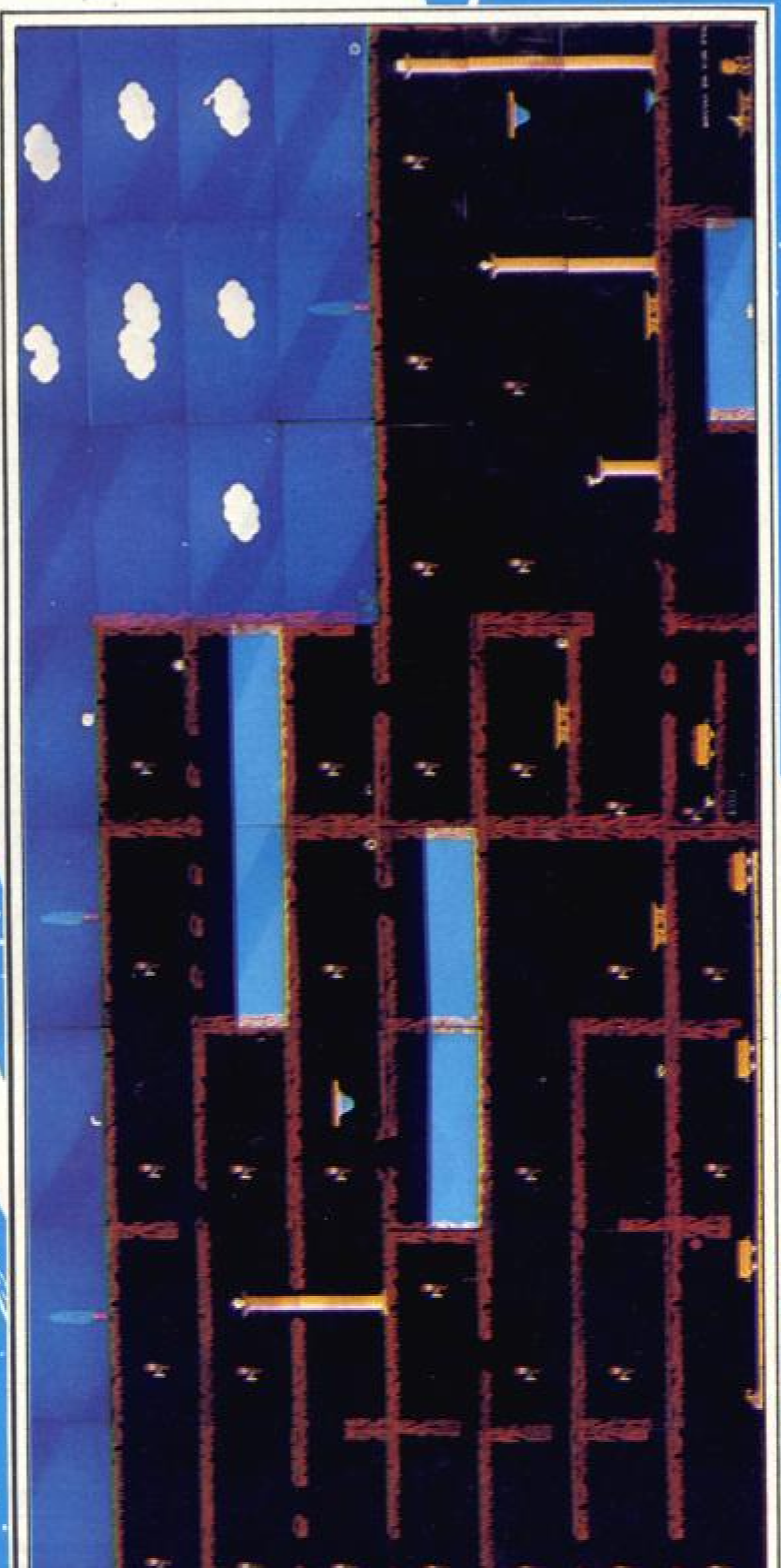
DYNAMITE DAN II CORRECTION

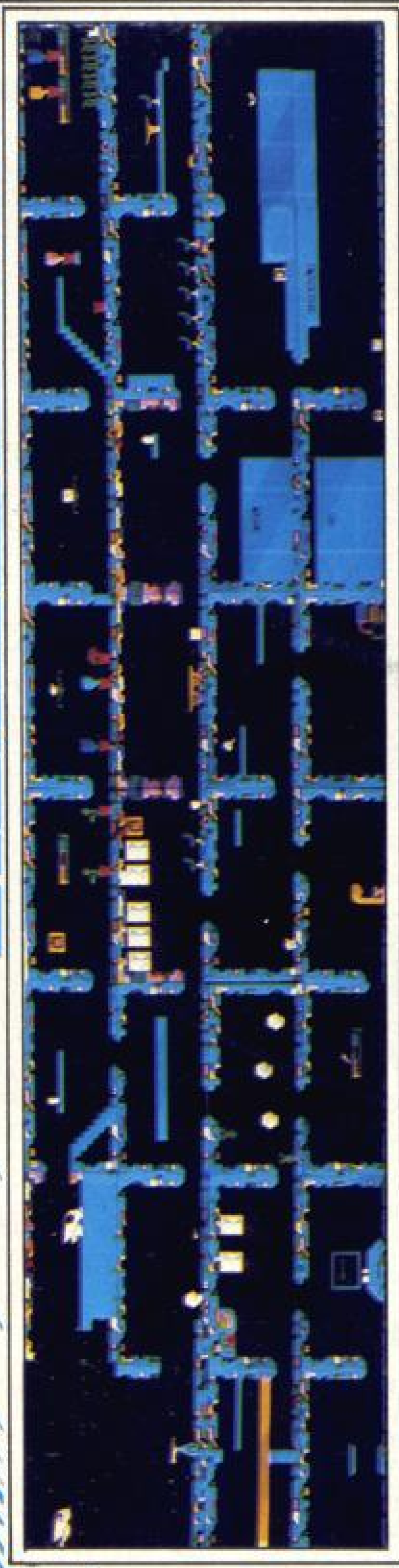
Gosh, what can I say? The poor girlies up at Gravel Hill have been inundated with 'phone calls about the *Dynamite Dan II* POKEs not to mention all the nasty letters you've sent to me! Well, I really don't know what went wrong last issue, but there was a he-uge cock-up on the POKEs front. For some reason I got my type setting codes all wrong and various other embarrassing things. You will be pleased to learn that Graeme kicked me thoroughly around the office with his special barbed Doc Marten Boots which he reserves only for very serious offences. Anyway enough of the apologies. This is what the *Dynamite Dan II* POKEs should have said. Change the following lines to read as follows:

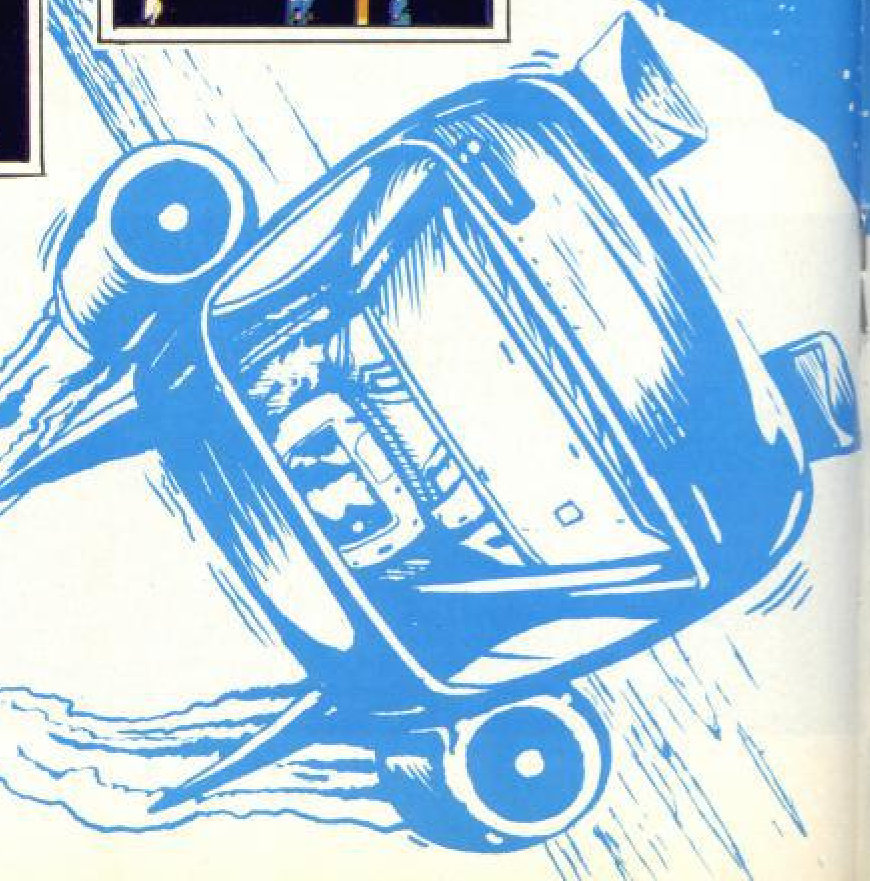
```
10 CLEAR 26000
60 LET prog=PEEK 23635+256*
PEEK 23636
100 same as line 60
120 RANDOMIZE USR
(prog+176)
```

Now change the equals in line 30 to a hash sign and everything should be ticketty-boo

UNIVERSAL HERO



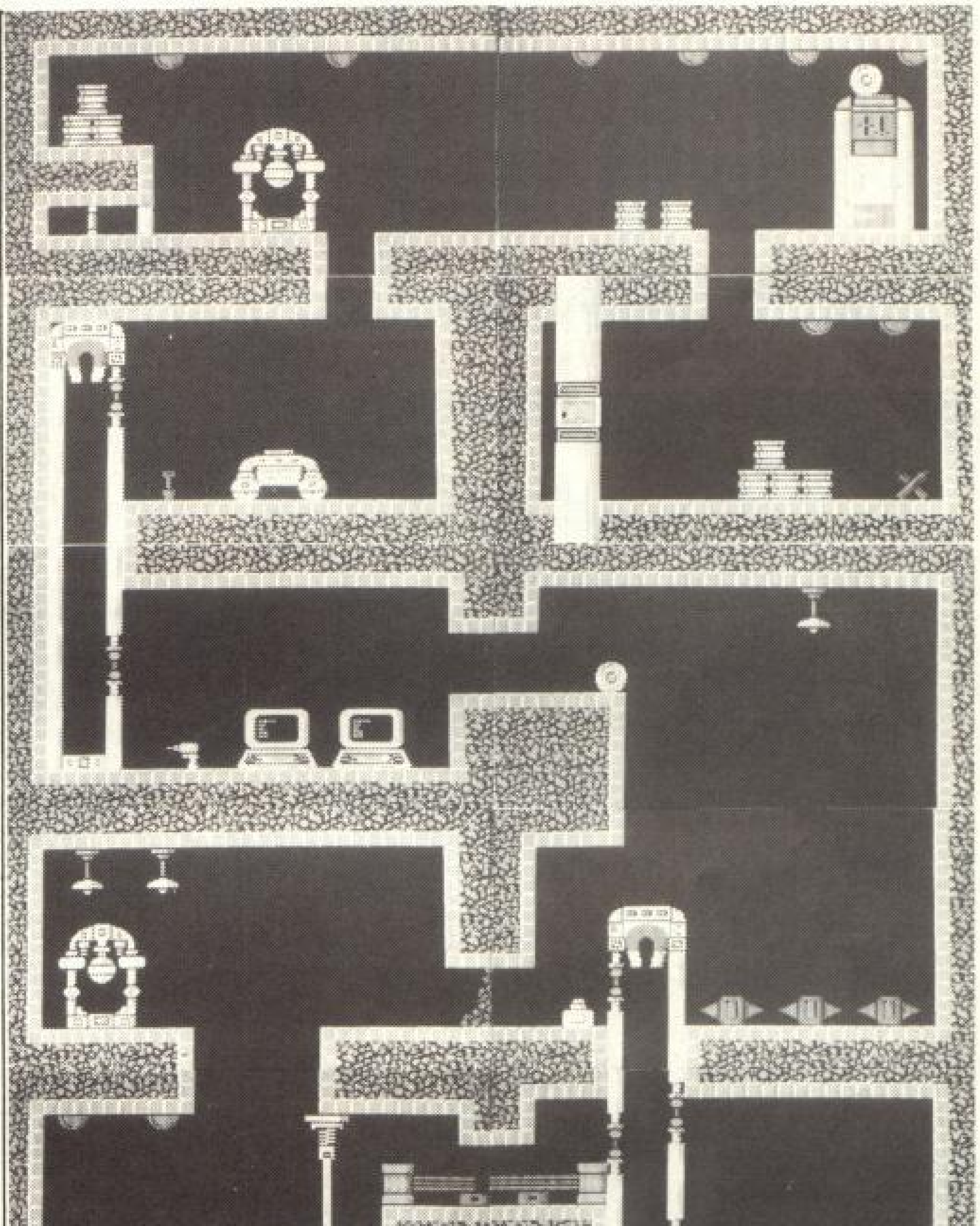




Last issue I printed the tips to get off the first section of *Universal Hero.* This month to accompany the splendid map given to me by Stuart Middleton (who wrote the game) and Ray Tredoux (his side-kick) from XCEL and included in glorious technicolour in the maps section, is the final solution to the game. (Gosh what a long and rambling sentence). Anyway, courtesy of Leigh Bogardis from Truro in Cornwall, here is the final portion.

1) *Use the air tank in to replenish your oxygen supply*
2) *Us the fly swatter found in room to kill the cockroach*
3) *Use the cockroach in to kill the venus fly traps*
4) *Use the potting shed key to open the door*
5) *Use the watering can to get the flower*
6) *Use the weedkiller to get the boots*
7) *Use Droid Recall Device*
8) *Use rough glass (found in the first section) to get the lens*
9) *Use the mirror to divert the light beam*
10) *Use the lens to focus the light beam*
11) *Use spanner*
12) *Use Repair Droid to get the current of electricity*
13) *Use starting handle with the boot (to do this you must go between the two ledges) to teleport to the third section*
14) *Use the knife with the rope and rock to destroy the plant*
15) *Use the hammer with the bent key to get a straight key*
16) *Use the pump with the bent pipe to empty the water*
17) *Carry the Babbly Fish so that you can understand*
18) *Use the straight key which you have just unstraightened with your ickle hammer underneath the exit sign*
19) *Use the axle grease*
20) *Use the brake lever to move the cart*
21) *Use the talisman with the Pentacle and the ring to enable you to teleport*
22) *Now use the ring with the orb, pentacle and talisman to teleport*
23) *Stand on the table with the orb so that you can teleport*
24) *Use the ten pence piece*
25) *Use the passport with the ID card and the fuel to get to map 1*
26) *Get the lead radiation box and then get the plutonium*
27) *Get back to map 2*
28) *Use the ruby with the crystal and plutonium to complete the game*

EQUINOX MAP LEVEL 6




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PALACE software

PLAYING TIPS

CAULDRON II POKES

At long last some *Cauldron II* POKEs have actually arrived at CRASH Towers (and about time too!). Thanks to G Patterson from Billingham in Cleveland here is that much sought after routine. (Gleeful chuckle).

```
10 CLEAR 65535
20 LOAD "" CODE
30 POKE 25046,205: POKE 25047,234: POKE 25048,97
40 FOR f=25066 TO 25073: READ a: POKE f,a: NEXT f: RANDOMIZE USR 25000
50 DATA 62,0,50,238,206,195,196,97
```

Press RUN and start the *Cauldron II* tape.

When the game has loaded, press BREAK and type in:

POKE 52974,0: RANDOMIZE USR 52180.

You will now have infinite lives.

KIREL Infinite Lives

Remember Addictive's release a few months back about a cute amphibious creature by the name of *Kirel*? Well, here are some POKEs from Edward Ricketts from Corsham in Wiltshire to give the poor, put-upon chap a helping hand. Simply type them into your Spectrum and RUN to get infinite lives for your blobby chum.

```
10 CLEAR 24575: PRINT AT 10,8; "START KIREL TAPE"
20 FOR f=23296 TO 23309: READ a: POKE f,a: NEXT f
30 DATA 221,033,096,234,017
31 DATA 180,004,062,255,055
32 DATA 205,086,005,201
40 FOR f=1 TO 4: RANDOMIZE USR 23296: NEXT f
50 FOR f=60187 TO 60206: READ a: POKE f,a: NEXT f
60 DATA 221,033,000,096,017
70 DATA 000,136,062,255,055
80 DATA 205,086,005,175,050
90 DATA 064,138,195,091,138
100 POKE 60094,61: POKE 60095,235
110 CLS: RANDOMIZE USR 60000
```

MOLECULE MAN Infinite Everything

If you're having trouble negotiating your rotund friend around the extensive maze in *Molecule Man* from MASTERTRONIC then help is at hand. G Patterson from Billingham in Cleveland has come up with a POKE which gives *Molecule Man* infinite everything.

Type MERGE "" and start *Molecule Man* tape. When the OK message comes onto the screen stop the tape and press LIST. Put the following POKE in before the second RANDOMIZE USR statement:

POKE 64585,0

Press RUN and re-start the *Molecule Man* tape. When the game has loaded you will find that Molecule Man is now totally tuff!

LAP OF THE GODS

Michael Rowe from Mansfield in Nottinghamshire sent in this next cheat. It enables you to get into System Cheat Mode in *Lap of the Gods*. Play the game through once, scoring enough to get the chance to put your name on the high score table. Instead of typing in your name, however, type CHEAT. Next go you will find the option System Cheat Mode on your menu. This gives you a full inventory of useful items to make your mission a bit easier.

MONTY ON THE RUN Still Running???

For some strange reason this last couple of weeks I've been inundated with letters pleading for POKEs on *Monty on the Run*. Moved by the sheer lengths that people will go to just for the sake of a measly infinite lives POKE or an anti-crusher curse, I decided to delve into my 'vast' Playing Tips file for this much sought after POKE. However, to my extreme embarrassment, I didn't have one POKE that actually worked (blush). Imagine my ecstasy when I read Andy Powell's letter and found that he had actually included some POKEs for the game. And here they are. You can put your pick axe handles down now thankyouverymuch.

POKE 34716,24 (infinite lives)
POKE 34445,201 (crushers don't kill)
POKE 36765,201 (monsters don't kill)
POKE 39504,0 (water doesn't kill)

SUPERNOVA TIPS

A few issues ago CRASH did a review on a piece of Home Grown software called *Supernova* all about a little ROBOT on a nightmarish holiday up in the Astral belt. Anthony Bailey who wrote *Supernova* (and has apparently sold a fair few copies of the game) has sent in some exclusive tips for you lucky CRASH readers.

The basic idea of the game is to help ROBOT raise enough cash so that he can go home from his horrid holiday. The easiest way of doing this is by selling things to fellow tourists. There are nine tourists in the game and each one will buy a specific item. What each tourist says gives you a clue as to what he'll buy from you.

For instance, the first tourist is stuck out in the entrance corridor complaining that 'They won't let me in.' Therefore you can sell him your passport for 100 credits. The other tourists are locked in their rooms on level two. The room keys are scattered throughout the hotel in easily accessible lockers. Find these lockers and open the doors. One tourist will buy his room key from you. To get your own room, collect your key from reception, then take your case and leave it in the Luggage room. The staff will then deliver the wrong case to your room and you can sell this case to another tourist.

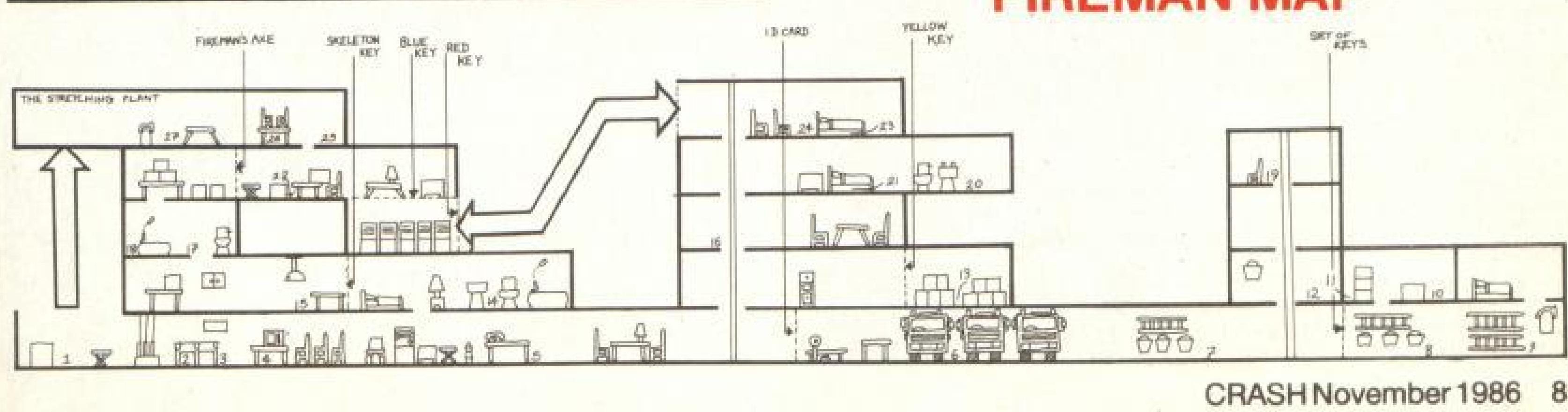
You have two other objects which can be used. The comb lets you into the Teeth specialist and the braces you'll find there can be sold to the tourist who wants suspenders. The camera opens the cinema door. Use the Friday video to enter Fish where you will find several useful items including chips which will open the Casino. To make some more easy money, buy the gold shares, then buy the brooch. Sell the shares back at profit and then return the brooch and you gain 100 credits.

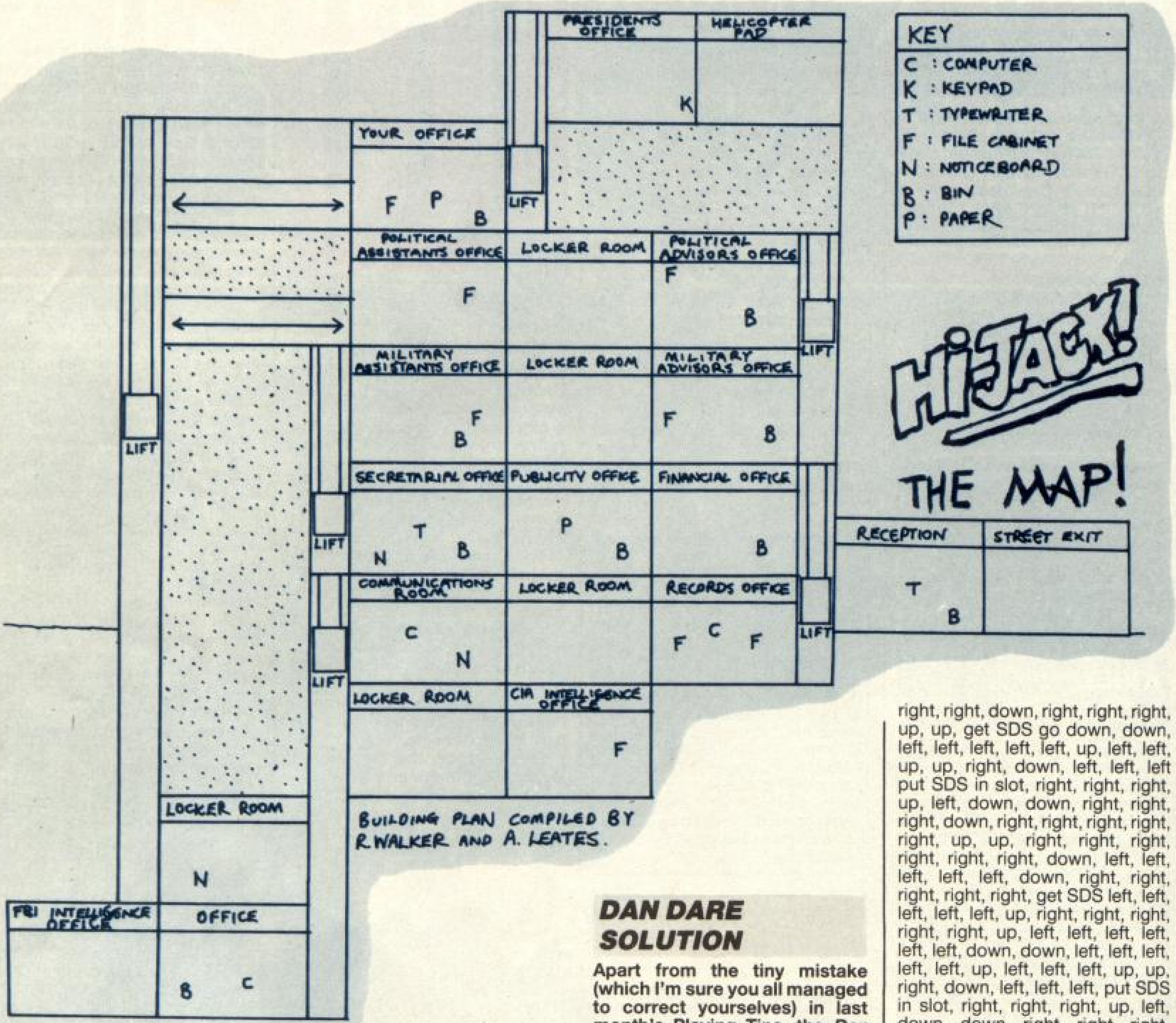
If you are puzzled by the computer remember that there are five empty lockers by it and five signs in the equation. Also, not everything in the arcade is a game . . .

These are only the first tips to get you started on *Supernova*. Anthony has promised to send the rest of the solution which I shall hopefully be including in the December issue or maybe the Christmas special.



THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING FIREMAN MAP





ACE CHEAT

CASCADE recent flight simulation *Ace* was received quite favorably here in CRASH Towers. Steven Mitchell from Halifax, West Yorkshire got rather peeved at crashing every time he tried an ambitious loop-the-loop. However, while attempting this dangerous manoeuvre, he discovered a rather useful cheat. In order to re-fuel in *Ace* you need quite a lot of fuel which rather defeats the object of the exercise . . .

Steven has however discovered a way to re-fuel without using any fuel whatsoever! Begin to climb vertically then reduce the thrust to zero. Surprisingly enough you continue to climb and even accelerate. However, if your velocity gets over 9999 then it will flip back to nought again and you'll crash.

I.C.U.P.S. POKES

Mr Churchyard has been busy yet again. This time he's come with a jolly little routine for *I.C.U.P.S.* If you type this into your Spectrum and RUN you'll find that you can fly through the first section without being hassled by any of the nasties. When you get to the second section of the game you're on your own, and it's all down to skill and judgement. Take it away Phil.

```
1 CLEAR 65535
2 PRINT AT 21,6; "START
I.C.U.P.S. TAPE"
3 MERGE ""
4 RUN 5
15 FOR x=0 TO 26
45 DATA 221,33,0,91,17,0,117,62
46 DATA
255,183,55,8,243,205,98,5
47 DATA
210,0,0,62,200,50,245,134
48 DATA 195,185,134,
```

DAN DARE SOLUTION

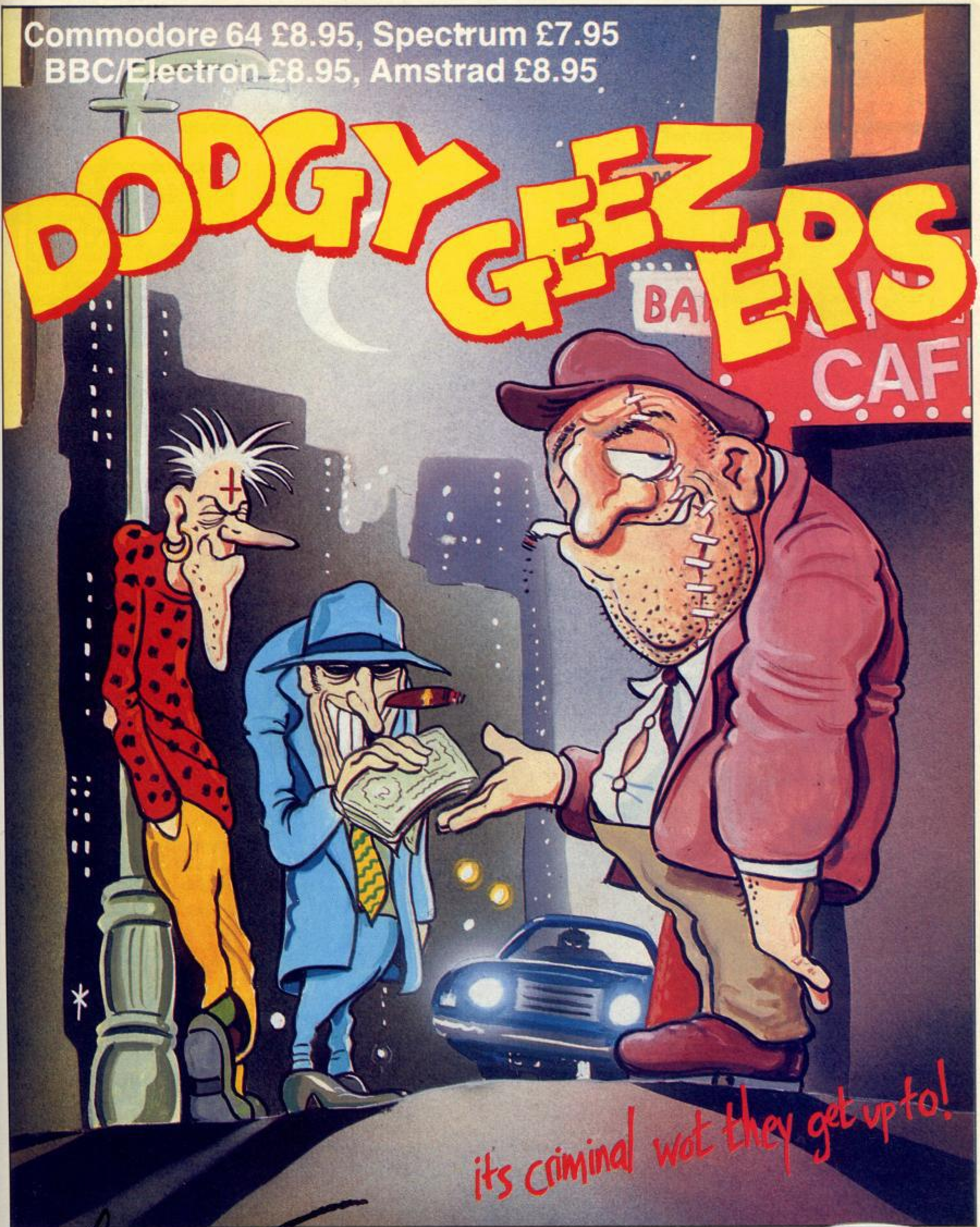
Apart from the tiny mistake (which I'm sure you all managed to correct yourselves) in last month's Playing Tips, the *Dan Dare* POKEs hopefully helped you to get quite a bit further into the game. In case you didn't manage to suss out what was wrong with the routine I shall tell you. In line 60 it should be a hash not an equals. Anyway, in case some of you are still having problems completing the game, here's the complete solution as sent in by Paul Forsyth **from Glasgow:**

So flex your fingers and file your typing nails down and from the start, ladies and gentlemen. . . . go!

right twice, down, right, down, down, right, right, up, get S.D.S, down, down, left, left, left, left, walk to the left of the screen and one of the circles will flash go right, right, right, right, up, up, right, right and you will see the second sector. Go right, right, right, right, down, left, left, left, left, jump ravine, left, down, get SDS, right, right, right, right, right, up, up, left, left, left, left, left, down, down, left, left, left, left put SDS in slot, right, right, right, up, left, down, down, right, right, right, down, right, right, right, up, get SDS go down, down, left, left, left, left, left, up, left, left, up, up, right, down, left, left, left put SDS in slot, right, right, right, up, left, down, down, right, right, right, down, right, right, right, right, up, up, right, right, right, right, right, right, down, left, left, left, left, left, down, right, right, right, right, right, get SDS left, left, left, left, left, up, right, right, right, right, right, up, left, left, left, left, left, left, down, down, left, left, left, left, left, up, left, left, left, up, up, right, down, left, left, left, put SDS in slot, right, right, right, up, left, down, down, right, right, right, down, right, right, right, right, right, up, up, right, right, right, right, right, right, up, left, left, left, left, left, up, up, right, right, right, right, up, left, left, left, left, left, left, get SDS, up, right, right, down, right, right, right, down, left, left, left, left, down, down, right, right, right, right, right, down, left, left, left, left, left, down, down, left, left, left, left, left, up, left, left, left, up, up, right, down, left, left, left, Put SDS in slot, left, left, up, up, left, left

AND THAT'S IT (cough, cough, splutter).





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BBC/Electron £8.95, Amstrad £8.95
DODGY GEEZERS
CAF
its criminal wot they get up to!

LAP OF THE GODS POKE

As well as the *Lap of the Gods* cheat in this issue there is also a short routine for the game for those people who would rather use POKEs than cheats. By typing this listingette into your trusty Spectrum you will find that your little creature has infinite lives and the devil incarnations cannot steal your effigies. Thanks for this go to Peter Featherstone from Leeds.

```
5 REM LAP OF THE GODS
10 CLEAR 28999
20 LOAD "" CODE
30 FOR f=47039 TO 47048
40 READ a: POKE f,a
50 NEXT f
60 RANDOMIZE USR 47000
70 DATA
175,50,219,210,50,149,212,195,8
0,255
```

DO NOT READ THIS!

Also from Peter Featherstone is this routine for infinite lives in *Thrust*. But before I give it to you, you must promise me faithfully that you won't use it for a couple of months yet because we've only just reviewed the game. Promise? Thankyou.

Now this is what you do....

```
5 REM THRUST
10 CLEAR 65399
20 LOAD "" CODE
30 FOR f=65425 TO 65431
40 READ a: POKE f,a
50 NEXT f
60 RANDOMIZE USR 65400
70 DATA
175,50,51,153,195,0,250
```

PAPERBOY Infinite Lives

It's a hard life being a Paper Boy/Girly/Person. I used to do a paper round many eons ago. ELITE's latest arcade conversion residing under the same name is just as hard to get through as the real thing, especially when you get onto the days at the end of the week. However, do not despair. Stephen Thompson from Hartlepool in Cleveland has sent in a really good routine to get you through the game and onto the high score table in no time at all.

Not only does your Paper boy avoid pegging out, but he also continues to ride through impassable objects as if they weren't even there! Simply type in the listing and RUN, then play *Paper Boy* tape from the beginning.

Now what could be easier?

```
10 LOAD "" CODE
20 FOR f=65302 TO 65307
30 READ a: POKE f,a: NEXT f
40 POKE 65110,22: POKE
65111,255
50 RANDOMIZE USR 65000
60 DATA 50,151,187,195,86,5
```



They came. They saw. They did a little shopping. Ray Tredoux and Stuart Middleton troll round Ludlow after delivering the UNIVERSAL HERO map

PENTAGRAM POKE(!!)

No, wait a minute, don't go away, this is important! I know *Pentagram* POKEs were done eons ago but these are different guv, honest. Not yer run of the mill POKEs here y'know. No pappy infinite lives this time. Slice me a lemon etc, etc.... These *Pentagram* POKEs will give Sabreman he-uge leaps. No guv, I don't mean yer run of the mill leaps, guvnor. These leaps'll 'ave yer average Sabreman leaping clean out of the screen, slice me a lemon, (etc repeat to fade)....

Simply put this POKE in before the RANDOMIZE USR statement. You know how to do this, don't you? First type MERGE instead of LOAD and stop the tape after the header and you'll see an O.K message. LIST it and stick in yer POKE

POKE 50751,0

PEN FRIEND PLEA

Anton Lang would very much like a pen friend. He is fifteen years old, has a Spectrum and would like to exchange games, POKES, and maps with fellow CRASH readers everywhere and anywhere. You can contact him at 64 Shirley Avenue, Croydon Surrey, CR0 85H. There, aren't I nice?

PAPERBOY MINI TIPS

To go with POKEs this month for *Paperboy*, here are some tips to help you finish the game with lots and lots of points. Credit must go to A Pruhs from Lincs.

Try to keep off the road as much as possible. On reaching the BMX track, take the left hand side of obstacles as there are more obstacles to aim for. Jump over every ramp as this re-fills your paper bag with newspapers.

On Wednesday to Sunday there is a drunk to avoid. To dodge him, slow right down and drive off the path. He will now just walk right past you. Later on in the week it is better to go faster than slower as belting along at a fair speed makes it easier to dodge the faster items like the skateboard.

Finally, try and do as much damage as possible to the black houses but always leave some papers for the blue houses. Also try to remember where you can find more newspapers as this saves on time.

CHRIS JETMAN TURNER ANNOUNCEMENT.

Mr Turner is well and truly worn out with replying to your endless queries on POKEs and stuff. As from this month, however, could you send any correspondence directly to him at this address:

Chris (Jetman) Turner, Cardigan Arms, Kirkstall Road, Leeds.

Ta.

That's it for yet another month. The nights are closing in now and soon it'll be like working in a cave, because it's so dark in my tiny office. Let's have some maps on *Druid* and *Bombscare* next month as well as some tips and POKEs for *Lightforce*. Also, how about some requests for tips and POKEs which haven't been published before in CRASH for inclusion in the bumper Christmas Special? Use your imagination. Anyway, Happy Hallowe'en and keep those letters a-commin'. As usual mark them for my attention to HANNAH SMITH, CRASH PLAYING TIPS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.



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FRNTLINE

with Sean Masterson



THAT'S NOT YOUR FACE

How many advertisements for new arcade games have you seen with blurb to the effect that, 'This game is a shoot em up with elements of strategy . . .' in recent months? I realised at the PCW Show that companies are not really going out of their way to make games more thought provoking or satisfying. Some reviewers have been taken in, almost quoting the blurb on game inlays when they announce that a game has 'strategic overtones'. I nearly was myself.

Rubbish. Absolute drivel. Find me such a game. They don't exist and it's as simple as that. The software industry is paying lip service to an ever growing faction of gamers, instead of providing real diversity in their products. It's true that more cros-sover games have appeared in the mould of *Lords of Midnight* but arcade games have remained just that. Any use of 'strategy' in the blurbs must be in the most abstract sense only.

I'm not claiming that the con is wholly intentional. It seems to be a case of the King's New Suit, with some software houses believing that any increase in the complexity of play must entail a 'strategic' element. What hasn't occurred to them is that what is required is a change in the style of play — not the detail.

Anyway, moan over. Next month I hope to take a look at some home grown strategy games, supplied by FRONTLINE readers. . . .

NAPOLEON AT WAR

Producer: CCS
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Ken Wright**

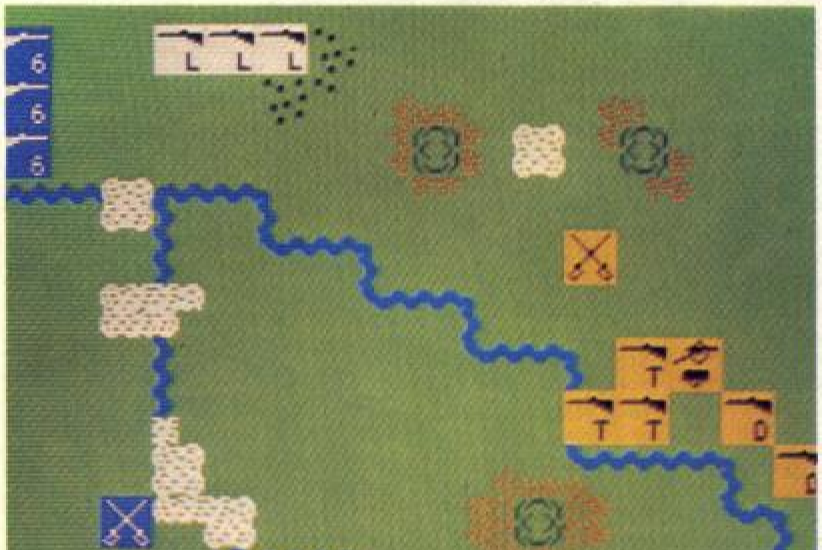
A CRASH Smash

This new game from **CCS**, the first since *Desert Rats*, is written by **Ken Wright**, author of some of **LOTHLORIEN**'s most successful titles including *Waterloo* and *Austerlitz*. Presumably, Mr Wright retained the copyright on the format of those games because this one works in exactly the same fashion. More of that later.

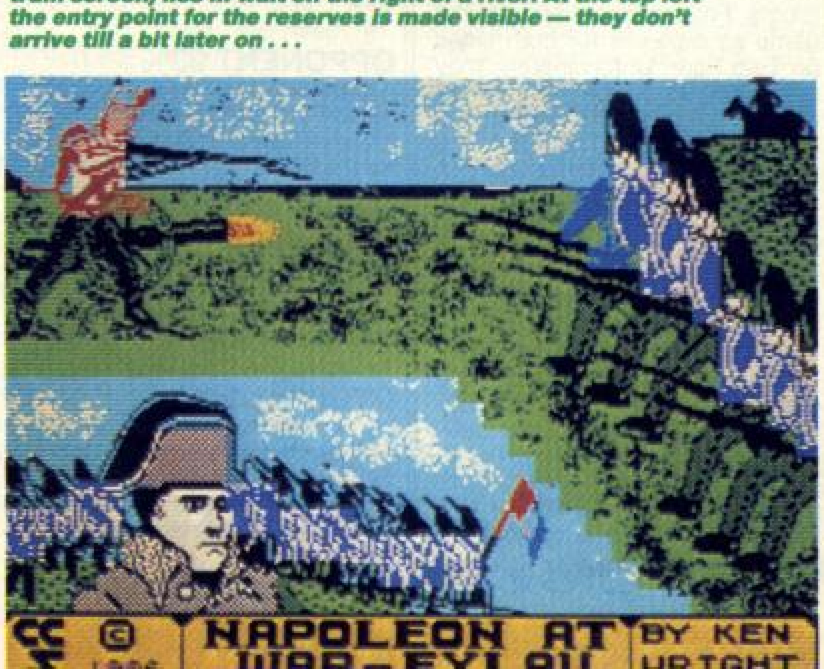
The game is a reconstruction of Napoleon's confrontation with the Russian army under Bennigsen in a solitaire game that casts you as Napoleon. The game gives you control over five infantry corps and one cavalry corps — each with three divisions. At last, artillery is included in the scenario and it's good to see that Mr Wright has acted on the constructive criticism from the public and given the player three units in this game.

Presentation is neat. After a passable loading screen, the player is presented with a scrolling map containing terrain symbols and unit markers which are uncluttered but obvious. Units are displayed as single character blocks annotated for unit type, Corps ID and Command ID if any. Cursor keys allow observation of the whole play area, and a menu at the base of the screen displays possible options as keypresses. The French are coloured blue, Russians are black on yellow and a single Prussian Corps (commanded by Lestocq) is displayed as black on white. You can analyse the strength and morale of your own units by asking for details when the cursor is above a unit. The marker then doubles in length to display the required information.

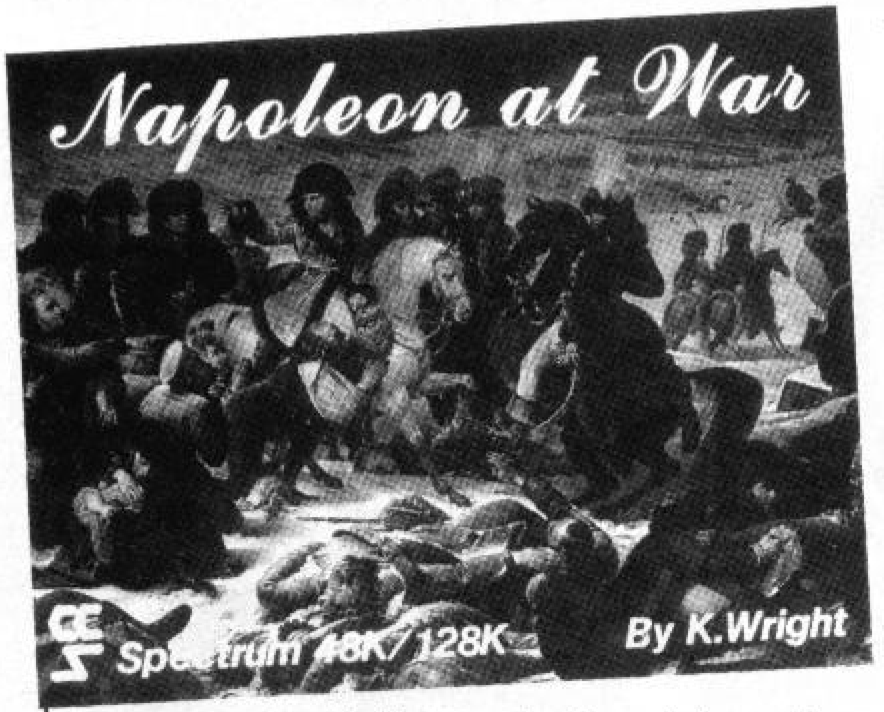
As in the previous games of this format, units may be ordered as an entire corps by directly ordering the lead unit of that corps, or as individual divisions — though as Mr Wright points out in the notes, such detailed command was unheard of at the time of the original conflict. If the orders you give are suspect, a corps commander may send a message to suggest an alternative course of action. Original orders will still be followed



A formidable Russian force (dressed in yellow for the Spectrum screen) lies in wait on the right of a river. At the top left the entry point for the reserves is made visible — they don't arrive till a bit later on . . .



▶



if you insist, but it's advisable to take note of the suggestions to begin with.

The game's three difficulty settings reflect the adaptability of the computer opponent. In a solitaire game, this has to be good. In *Napoleon at War* the opponent is nicknamed Charlie Oscar and the designer is evidently proud of his creation. Charlie O boasts unpredictability and sophisticated intelligence. Immediately the enemy forces start to move, hidden movement comes into play and opposing units begin to disappear from view. In fact the intelligence is a definite improvement on the earlier games and the advantages of this are manifold. If the enemy played in a similar fashion to *Waterloo*, my guess is that your artillery would hack most of them to pieces before they ever got close enough for melee. But it's good to see such a quality piece of programming.

In the original battle, both Napoleon and Bennigsen were left claiming victory. One thing was obvious, the battle had gone in a way neither had anticipated or desired. The game does well in recreating this confused and unsatisfying flow, and victory conditions are correspondingly difficult for both sides to fulfill. Again, it's good to see such demanding restrictions in a solitaire game.

The rules are straightforward and arrive on a glossy, fold out sheet. Apart from designer's and historical notes, the game includes a couple of useful battle maps and some new features such as the re-organisation of depleted units to maintain a coherent fighting force.

Moans? Well, there are a few. Marshal Ney's 6th Corps and Lestocq's Prussians come into the game as reserves for both sides on Turn Four. Unfortunately, they are displayed on the map at their relevant entry points right at the start of the game. The result is a slightly annoying distraction but one that can be lived with. My copy of the game also appeared to be slightly bugged, preventing me on certain occasions from offering orders to divisional sized units. Hopefully, this was just a fault in my copy as the bug seemed intermittent and random. Finally, the game's now obligatory double cassette housing boasts compatibility with 128K machines. Try as we might, we could only get the program to load on a 48K or 48K Plus model. There is no joystick option for control — only an aesthetic omission but it would have been nice.

Nearly a year after the appearance of Mr Wright's first Napoleonic games, he has entered the fray once more with a host of improvements on his original system. These are not necessarily dramatic or immediately obvious but, as I keep reminding people, the best parts of a strategy game are the bits you can't see. What choice do I have then, but to present this game with a well deserved CRASH Smash?

PRESENTATION 90%
Beautiful cover art, clean but attractive screen and well printed, thorough rules add up to good production values

RULES 90%
Some unnecessary brevity but no awkward omissions or cryptic explanations. Rules anyone could learn easily

PLAYABILITY 92%
Apart from the annoying distraction of those reserve units lurking on the map before they should be around, there's nothing to stop you from diving in at the deep end and just playing

GRAPHICS 89%
Perhaps these could have been livened up a little, but they work well as they stand

AUTHENTICITY 93%
The artillery has finally arrived; the hidden movement and re-organisation work well . . . very impressive

OPPONENT 93%
A game like this lives or dies by the quality of the opponent. While there will be some of you who master the game quickly, a new standard has definitely been set

VALUE FOR MONEY 96%
A quid cheaper than offerings of a year ago, and the system has matured in the meantime

OVERALL 95%
Improvements were almost obligatory after such time and there are more good products now by which to compare the game. I still think it's going to go down well



Judge Dredd nearly had a whole city to play in . . .

By way of light relief from hardcore strategy, here's a mini-report from the year's biggest RPG and War game convention: GAMES DAY '86 . . .

How many Games Days have there been now? An awful lot. The exact number of the latest one couldn't be remembered by anyone at this year's show but it must be into double figures. Running over the last Saturday and Sunday in September, it looked like another successful show with thousands of people packed into London's Royal Horticultural Centre on a hot and humid day.

The show followed its usual format. Stands of games dealers, companies and clubs lined the outside of the hall, leaving the central area for a range of games — role playing, wargame and classical. Some of these were demonstration games organised and run by particular groups. Others were public participation games where you could book time for Orc bashing and so on.

These are always the main visual attractions of a role playing convention and some world-class displays were to be found in the hall. The NOTTINGHAM PLAYERS GUILD, led by artist and game designer **Gary Chalk** had an immense fantasy wargame running on a table taking up a large portion of the display area. Thousands of hand painted 25mm lead figures, dragons, fantasy airships, dwarvish steam-powered battering rams and other weird and wonderful feasts for the eye were included. The terrain was lavishly detailed: castles rose several feet into the air at each end of the table; rickety wooden bridges spanning meandering rivers heaved under the weight of hundreds of heavily armed infantrymen rushing forward to meet the enemy's giants and zombies.

I asked Gary Chalk how many man hours had been put into the display but it was all he could do to shrug and say, 'Impossible to guess,' before grieving to hear of the loss of one of his most powerful leaders in combat. Tears in his eyes, he continued, ' . . . but the thing is, we do this for fun. We play on boards like this all the time. They're practical and not just for display.'

Apart from the dedicated behaviour of such gamers, there were more modest games on show based on everything from *Blake's 7* to *Judge Dredd* (another superb effort, complete with partially built city). In previous years, a variety of computers have been used to run wargames. This year there was only one computer running a game — a proud-looking Amstrad PCW 8256 demonstrating the kind of software SLOTH ENTERPRISES use to moderate Play By Mail games.

In a raised area at one end of the hall, a variety of costumed adventurers invited members of the public to a bit of swordplay. The weapons are convincing from a distance but



The castle walls at one end of the giant table that groaned under the weight of models created by the NOTTINGHAM PLAYERS

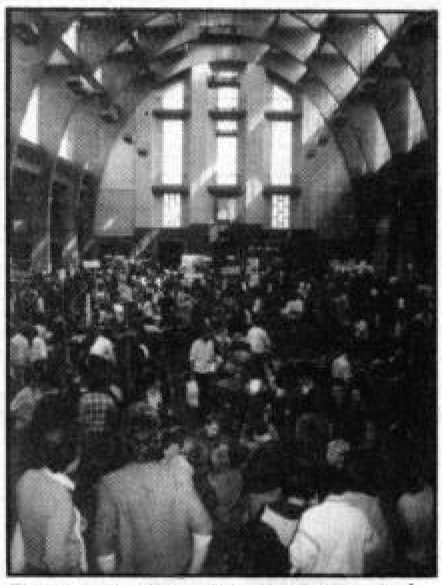
Just two people who thoroughly got into the spirit of GAMES DAY



One of the monster costumes created by MYTHLORE — enough to give anyone a bad dream or two . . .



A team of Fanzine Editors showing off their wares . . .



The arched ceiling of the Horticultural Hall spanned the throng at GAMES DAY

are invariably made of foam rubber, allowing you to merrily bash your best friend on the head and only damage pride. In upstairs rooms around the hall perimeter, games designers and fanzine editors gave talks on hobby related items. Artists also had a chance to show their abilities at an exhibition.

Perhaps the most visually attractive stand belonged to a company called **MYTHLORE STUDIOS** and their wares were remarkable: apart from costumes and armour of a very high quality, the **MYTHLORE**also makes small treasure chests, monsters' limbs in varying states of decay and even full size monster dummies. I know it sounds crazy (especially if you saw some of the price tags) but the quality of their work is incredible.

Fighting Fantasy authors and **GAMES WORKSHOP** founders **Steve Jackson** and **Ian Livingstone** were to be seen from time to time (along with **Rod Cousins** from **ACTIVISION** but this was largely an event for the public rather than personalities. Even the Games Day Awards (the only ones of their kind for the industry in this country) were typically informal.

The atmosphere at these events is traditionally more enjoyable than computer shows. There is little in the way of hard sell and more encouragement for people to just have fun. That they did. Some of the games were competitive by nature and offered prizes for those who survived but there was always the bar for those who didn't . . .

It's surprising how many of **GAMES WORKSHOP**'s ex-employees have now become successful gamebook authors: Jon Sutherland and Simon Farrel, Gary Chalk and Joe Dever, Ian and Clive Bailey, Jamie Thompson and Ian Marsh . . . But as Simon Farrel, one of the co-authors of a historical series of solo-gamebooks said, 'That part of the market is rapidly reaching saturation point.'

That brings me to the sad part of the story. In the last twelve years, role playing emerged as the most rapidly-growing, interesting and compelling new hobby in the western world. But it's two years since I last paid a visit to Games Day and little has changed. Roughly the same numbers of people go to visit. It's claimed as the largest convention of its kind, but it seems to have stabilised in terms of popularity. The gaming press has progressed little either. There are more British journals dedicated to what was once a solely American phenomenon, but the hobby seems to have become stagnant and that is unfortunate.

Perhaps that distant link between traditional role playing and computer gaming will create a new boom and signal a fresh growth period for the hobby. The inherently complex nature of RPGs can only benefit from the availability of cheap and commonplace processing power. It would appear however, that the right circumstances have not yet arisen.

FRNTLINE FORUM



Brevity is beauty. Beauty is truth. With such astounding philosophy, it's straight into a mini FRONTLINE FORUM!

Dear Sean
Wargamers are in a minority because there is a large number of bad games that serves only to put off potential newcomers. Only a few classics exist. The Spectrum isn't used to the full as it is for other types of games, and few software houses bother with strategy games anyway because there is more money to be made in *Jet Set Willy 25* and lots of mindless sheep ready to buy it.

Whilst computer wargamers may be a minority, the number of true wargamers is far greater than that of home computer owners. The subject has been practised for centuries and is a standard part of the teachings in military colleges such as Sandhurst and West Point. It is a new hobby as far as computer gaming goes, and few wargamers have home micros but the number is growing. Only in the last year or so, articles about computer wargaming have started to appear in various wargaming magazines. It's only a matter of time before the demand for more sophisticated games increases.
David Eltringham, Stockton, Cleveland

Actually, a substantial number of wargamers have home micros. Most however, do not play computer wargames. They tend to use their micros as a game aid with the computer calculating moves and combat results. Most of their income is spent on miniatures. Both software and miniature figures are expensive, but the situation is improving.

SM

Dear Sean
A bit of constructive criticism. In general, most strategy games have poor graphics. Okay, they do their job and can be recognised, but rarely do they go beyond that. It may well be that strategy games require by their nature more memory for rules and a playing area, leaving little memory for graphics (in 48K anyway) . but with the advent of 128K machines, it should be possible to provide rules, maps and good graphics.

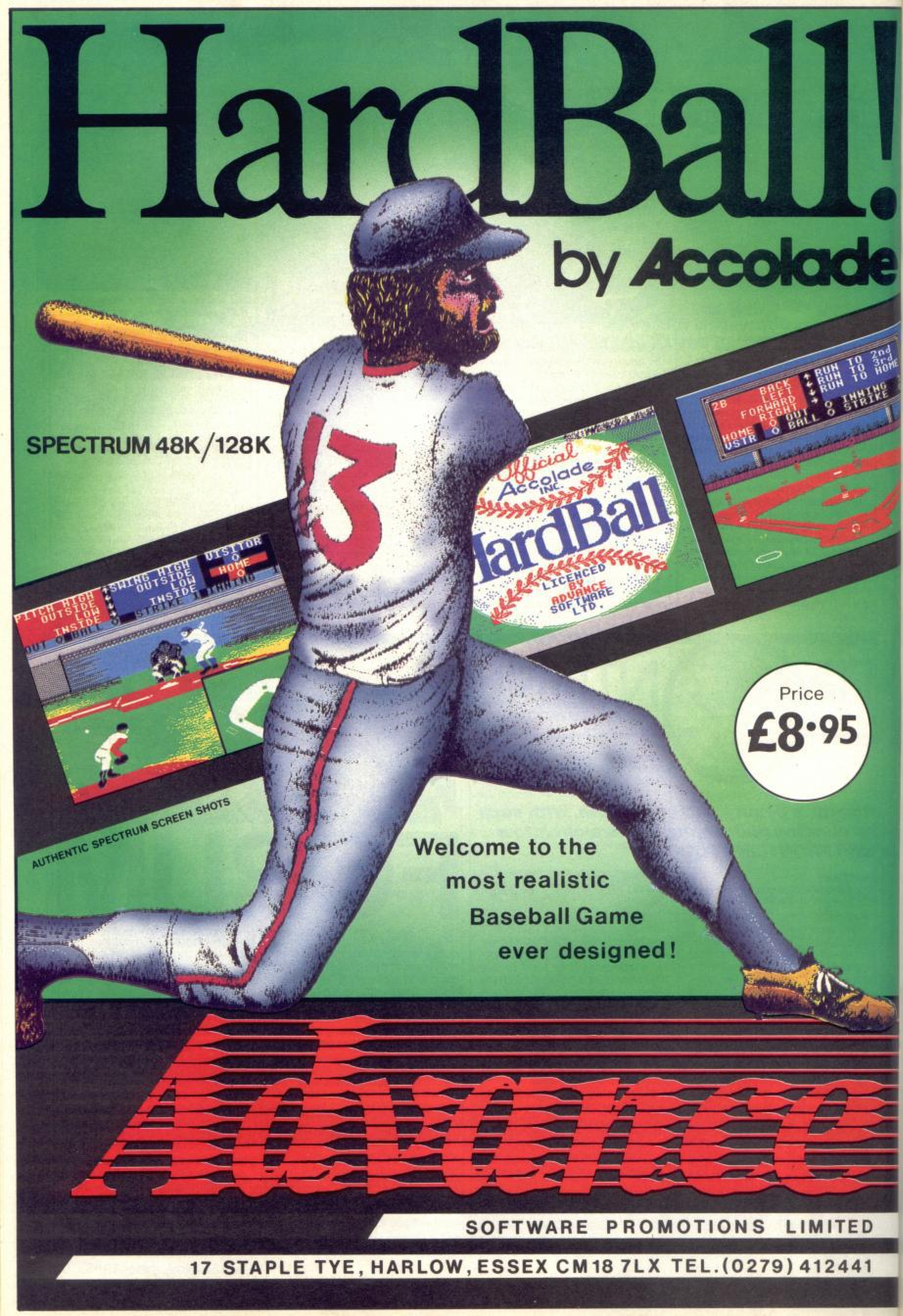
Quite a while ago, *Think* by **ARIOLASOFT** appeared in the main review section and received pretty good ratings. I wonder how much higher they might have been if the game had been reviewed in FRONTLINE. After all, it is a strategy game. So is Chess for that matter. I think the chances are that **THE EDGE**'s *Psi-Chess* will be reviewed in the main section as well. Why? Because it is polished software and as such looks out of place in FRONTLINE. I hope that changes.
David Wild, Edwinstowe, Notts

You imply that you are satisfied (to an extent) with the complexity of games as they stand and that extra memory is best applied to aesthetics. I must disagree. I'd rather have an extra scenario or better intelligence than better graphics. Anyway, software houses still largely ignore 128K machines. Getting them to write 128K strategy games is harder still.

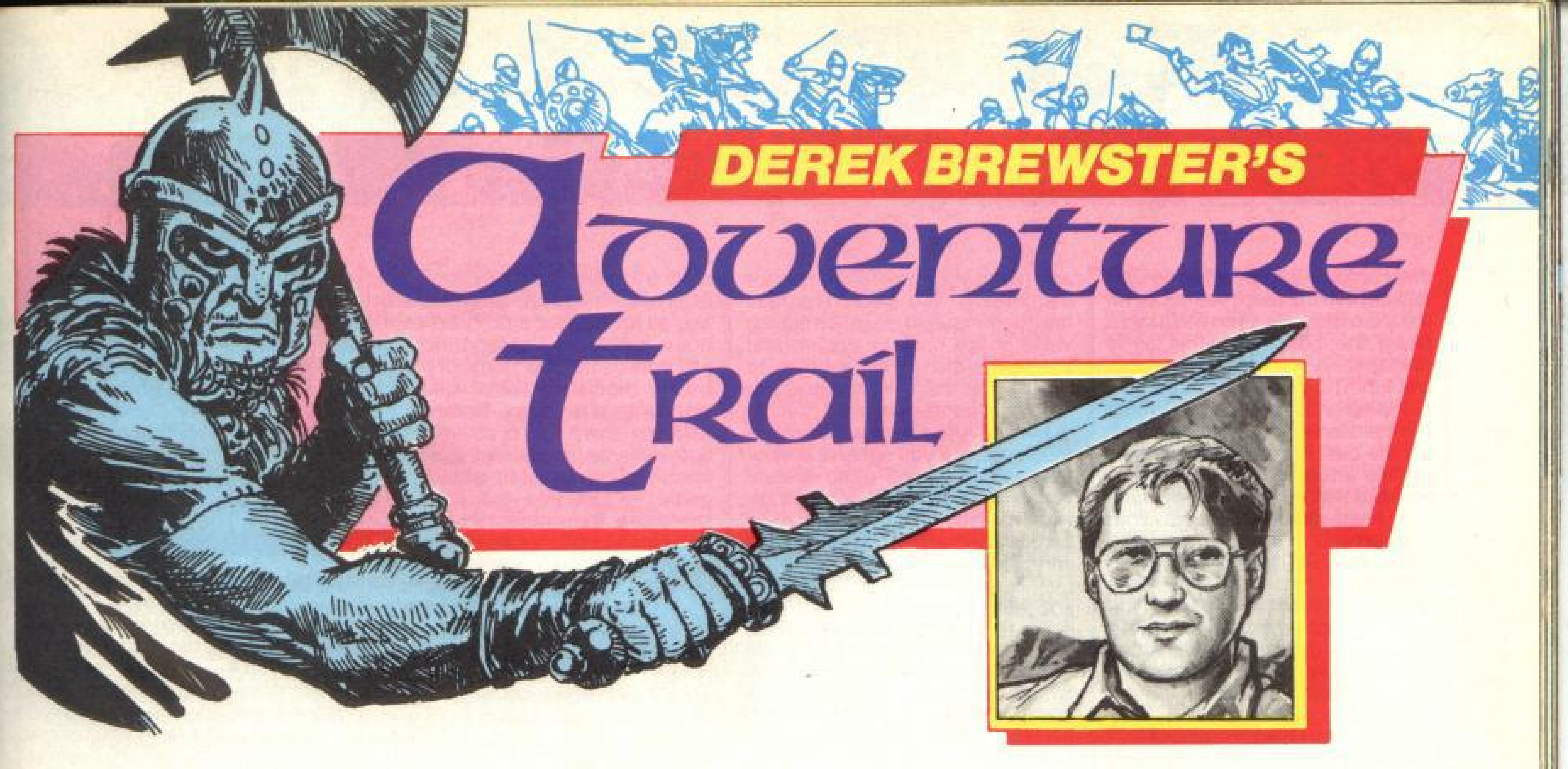
Your second point, I agree with entirely. Go to any normal bookshop and you will find good SF and Fantasy literature is put in the classics section instead of the SF/Fantasy department where it belongs. When did you last see Dante's Inferno alongside a Robert Heinlein novel? When people have a good product, they tend to be wary of marketing it in a way that might be off-putting to the masses. I hope things change too. You have earned yourself £20 worth of software for your troubles.

SM

Next month — realtime wargaming, tips for *Desert Rats* and more . . . Send your missives to FRONTLINE FORUM, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.



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DEREK BREWSTER'S Adventure Trail

HOUSE HUNTING

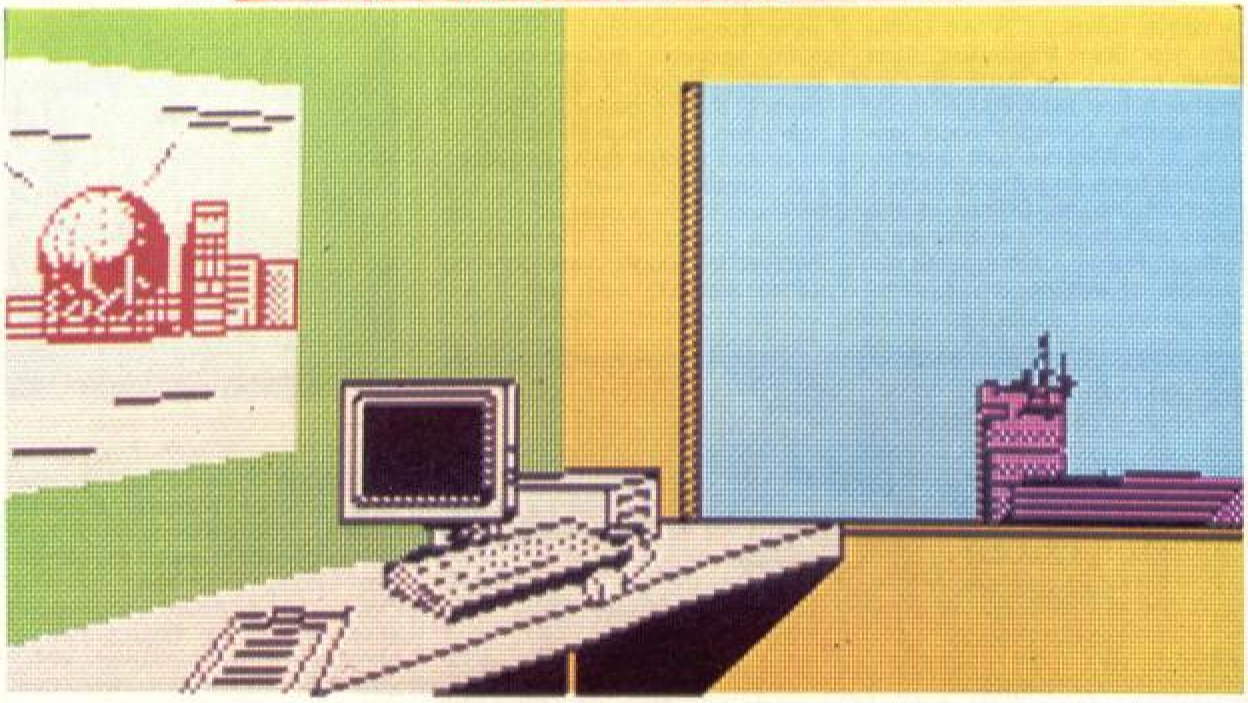
It is standard practice (now that the few professional software houses who used to pay royalties quickly have left the games side of the industry) for a programmer to be paid many months after a game has been submitted to a software house. This can prove annoying to a full-time programmer but is, admittedly, common pratice in parallel industries, for example, book publishing.

A more recent turn of events, however, is rather worrying; some software concerns are commissioning several versions of a blockbuster and only paying the one, final, winner with no money going to the luckless programmers who produced the less favourable versions. Worse still are some houses who are so devious, or unprofessional, as to make an offer for a game under fierce competition only to reject it much later when the game has lost some of its topicality. Such foul play leads to suspicions of double dealing on the part of the software houses. Tactics such as delaying competitive releases, or even pinching program ideas, can't be ruled out. It would be a good thing for programmers to honestly exchange notes on which software houses are unreliable or unprofessional, as such information might help bring programming onto a more secure footing and help eliminate rumours which do no-one any good.

Because of the uncertainties over payments for programmers they will be much more reluctant to spend large amounts of time on one mega-game and so churn out many smaller, less innovative, programs. Ironically, the churning out of conversions can be more lucrative than good innovative programming. Hence, it may well be that programmers will be less inclined to push the Spectrum to its limits, a thought which should sadden any Spectrum owner.

AFTERSHOCK

Producer: **Interceptor**
Price: **£9.99**
Author: **David Banner**



Eye, eye, no sooner do I mention the old **Banner/INTERCEPTOR** gang in the August editorial than, lo and behold, up they pop after a year spent in the wilderness. Well all I can say is welcome back, all is forgiven, and don't get too worried about this review — after a year of *Quill*ed games anything that isn't *Quill*ed immediately gets pride of place these days.

David M Banner first worked with INTERCEPTOR on *Message from Andromeda* (CRASH Aug 84) noteworthy for its fast machine code response, silent key entry, lack of cursor, pernickety vocabulary, and good graphics which, already residing in memory, were quickly drawn. Apart from the improvement in graphics demanded by all games purchasers, very little changed through *Forest at World's End* (Nov 84), *Jewels of Babylon* (Feb 85) and *Warlords* (Sep 85), (these last two with **Terry Greer**).

Warlords had particularly short location descriptions but shared the series' distinction in needing prepositions with the input while all other adventures had coalesced down to a verb/noun understanding. The poor EXAMINE command was as constant as the price: £5.50. The review of *Jewels of Babylon* caused a stir in the INTERCEPTOR camp because they assumed the impressive graphics alone warranted a good review whereas I saw my task as to review the game as an adventure; after all, anyone could look at the screen shots and make their own minds up about the quality of the pictures (and they were, indeed, super). A criticism I made which now looks dated was that aimed at all these games using the same system with apparently no room for improvement. Dated now because that was a time when innovation and improvement were the name of the game (as in arcades) but the invention of *The Quill* put paid to any hopes of adventuring breaking new ground consistently. So now the tables have turned, and games like those from INTERCEPTOR are very much welcomed.

Having said all that, this latest release ending the year's hiatus,



does actually improve the old system as here the text does not fly off the top of the screen on fresh input along the bottom so that all is readable in a very reasonable fashion. The pictures, so attractive in *Jewels* and *Warlords*, are almost as impressive. The story is probably the best in the series recounting the aftermath of a huge earthquake which rocks a city whose very heart straddles the faultline. The experts had only predicted minor rumbles for years but an underground nuclear test in the desert to the east activated the fault with dire results. Horrifying though the destruction to the city might be, it is its effects on the nuclear installation, for which you are responsible, that poses your immediate problems.

Having helped design the station you realise the importance of the failure of the coolant backup system before the earthquake, but now the quake has occurred, and you have been informed of the primary cooling system losing pressure and workers losing nerve. The urgency for you to escape your damaged office area and make your way to the reactor becomes all too clear. The fault has been traced to a switching valve in the backup system and you're the man who's job it is to ensure the valve works and the reactor is contained.

Playing *Aftershock* will be made much easier if you remember how this game's series often prefers you to be wordy with your input, with prepositions and so on sprinkled liberally for good measure. The first difficulty is met after only six locations. A chair, a pen and radio are picked up, along with some tissues from the washroom. The lift is inoperative and the stairwell from your office is filled with smoke and flames. It becomes pretty obvious that the chair is used somehow to escape and this is soon achieved if the program's propensity for long, exact sentence structure is remembered. After the claustrophobia of the first six locations the program runs wild with you being able to wander a great many locations without pausing for thought. Pause for thought you eventually must, however, when diverse objects are met: fruit and meat vie with the likes of diamonds and a television set, all looking for a problem as a home to settle in. The food is found just outside the zoo, home of lions, bears, reptiles, insects, and an elephant on a ramp. Something tells me there's a problem here somewhere, I wonder if you can spot it? One timely tip about this game — get into the habit of searching the artefacts of areas and don't just rely on the bottom line which tells of any obvious objects present. In this way you'll unearth even more objects looking for a problem to solve! On the technical side this program runs very well with instant high-res graphics and a sure-footed (if silent) entry system.

There's some confusion over who produced the fine graphics on this one: **Robin Chapman** is credited on the inlay but **Terry Greer** is once again cited on the loading screen.

Aftershock is something special in these days of *Quill*ed adventures. The storyline, and pictures which illustrate it, are really fine things to behold at a time when good new adventures are thin on the ground. If you hanker for the days when adventures were stimulating, thought-provoking and imaginative, have a look at this one, and fill a large black refuse sack with all the *Quill*ed clones released, because that's what I've done.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: once vocabulary is grasped progress becomes easier
Graphics: a few locations, very crisp and clear
Presentation: Spectrum character set but overall alright
Input facility: well beyond verb/noun, and v/n often not good enough on their own
Response: very fast
General rating: a quality, traditional, adventure

Atmosphere	89%
Vocabulary	78%
Logic	88%
Addictive quality	91%
Overall	**89%**

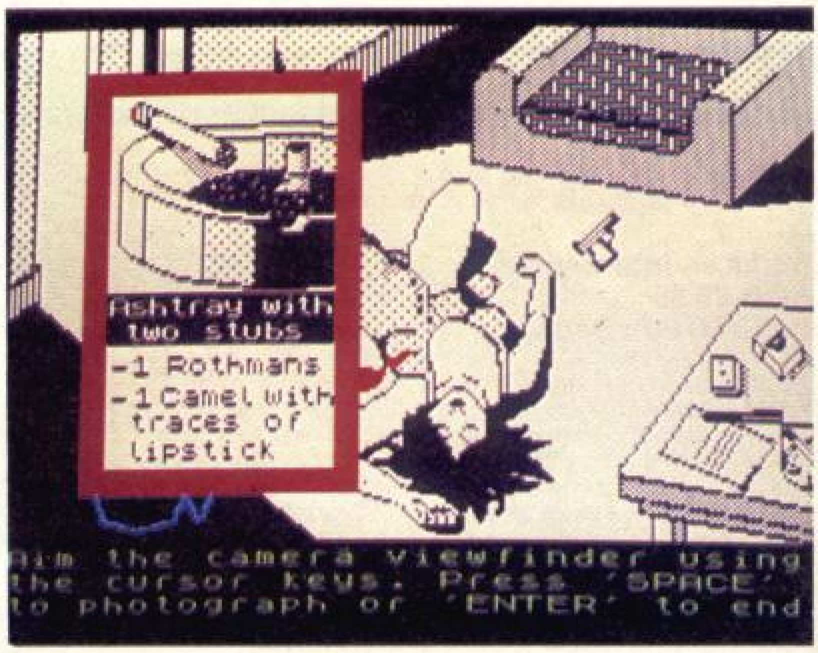
L'AFFAIRE VERA CRUZ

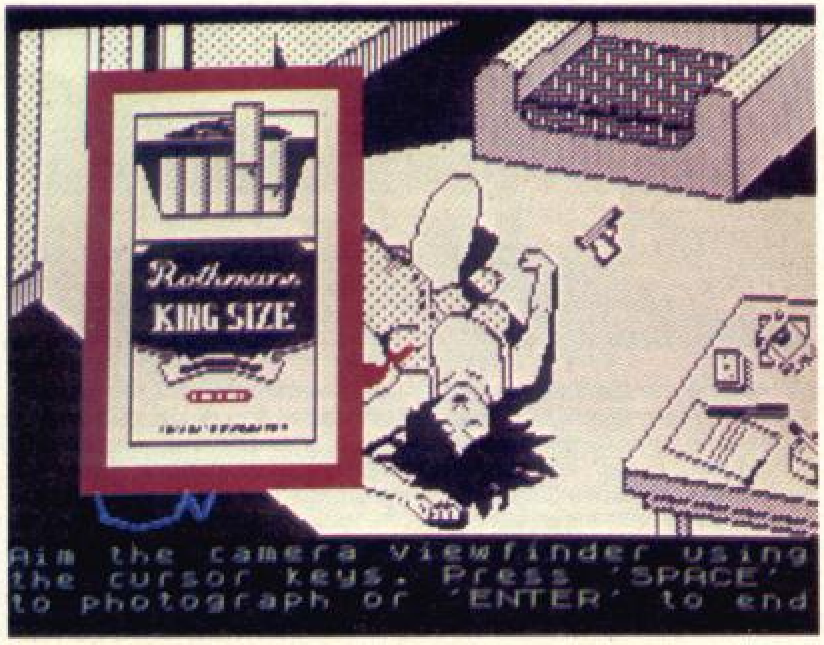
Producer: **Infogrames**
Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Gilles Blancon**

I thought I'd skip the smart guy intro and get straight into the story for this one.

You have just been appointed Detective Sergeant in the Crime Squad at Saint Etienne, a place known to you, me and everyone else who has sat through those interminably boring French lessons at school as just another faceless town on a that country's wallchart. As an Officer of the Police and in your capacity as a Judicial Police Officer, you are capable of leading any criminal investigation (which rules out any comparison to the luckless Clouseau, not to mention the fact that I can't even spell Clouseau).

No sooner have you taken up your new post than you are called upon to investigate what the press are fast terming L'Affaire Vera Cruz, or, in English, another one of those flippin' INFOGRAMES grames, sorry, games. On the 8th of August 1986 you are notified by the caretaker at the Forest apartment block of the discovery of a body. It has been provisionally identified as one of the residents and, from the caretaker's description, it is believed to be a case of suicide with a shotgun as the weapon involved (although I could only find a 9mm pistol).





You and your team must go to the murder scene to ascertain the facts which, in actuality, involves moving a camera around a picture (you know, the one with the attractive young lady lying on the ground). When the cursor lies over some interesting object, like a handbag or ashtray for example, then you take an instant picture which pops up onto the screen. It's worth noting here that the diary needs two photographs — one just shows the outside and it is the second which reveals the very important names inside. It is very easy to miss details here and to rush onto the second investigative part which loads next but, no doubt, like myself, you will resort to sweeping the screen systematically with your viewfinder in order to unearth all the details this scene holds. It would take a Clouseau sense of the inappropriate to try to commit these facts to memory and not to make good use of your notebook.

So onto Part Two and this is where the pace slows, not just because of the need to think out and to see through each investigation, but also because the instructions are inadequate leaving you to flounder in a most Clouseau-like fashion (oh crumbs, there I go mentioning that infamous French clot again, a right cliched review this one's turning into). The State Police Force is one of the oldest French institutions since its origins date back to Napoleon. Its experi-





ence regarding judicial matters has led it to computerise rapidly, far in advance of similar services in other countries. So, in addition to traditional methods such as comparing evidence, interviews, sifting through alibis, you can use the Diamond Computer Network. Mastering this sophisticated system is far from easy but once achieved will ensure the tieing together of justice departments, prison administrations and other police services along with the overall body, the National Police HQ.

Code M for message is the first of many access procedures for the Diamond Network. A message addressed to any service must include the code for that service and its base town and must impart as much information as possible.

The P Code stands for printer and this refers to a printer connected to your Spectrum. It must be an 80 column printer, otherwise you're with all the rest who must take notes manually.

S is for Statement. To hear someone's statement you need to know, not surprisingly, their name and whereabouts. E for Examinations encompass things like Autopsy while Comparison allows evidence to be correlated and compared, for example, an alibi from one suspect can be compared to the evidence of another. If you are certain of someone's guilt it only remains for you to arrest the culprit, but arbitrary arrest is the sign of a , oh go on, say it, a ... Clouseau type of incompetent.

L'Affaire Vera Cruz is a much more promising release than INFOGRAMES' last—*Mandragore*—but it fails just as much in presentation to the reviewer. Little help is given to get through what is a very complex game and one can't help but develop a healthy suspicion of games which are just dumped in laps; is it that the company doesn't want the reviewer to get far enough to see through the game? Leaving such weighty considerations aside what can be said is that the program has an irritating autorepeat on its input routine and the second part of the game chooses blinding white as its background colour (in fact the whole lot, including the super photofits of suspects, are all boring black and white). Regular readers of this column needs any reminder of what I think of that idea!

Difficulty: very hard to get into the second part
Graphics: very good
Presentation: neat, but that blinding white!
Input facility: keywords and sentences
Response: okay
General rating: good detective yarn

Atmosphere	81%
Vocabulary	84%
Logic	86%
Addictive quality	88%
Overall	**85%**

MORON

Producer: **Atlantis**
Price: **£1.99**
Author: **P & J Sutton**

In the past we had caveman, in the present we have commuter man, and in the future, according to this game from ATLANTIS, we have moron (plausible enough, I think). You find yourself on a moron spaceship orbiting 250 miles above, errr, wherever you are. But never mind where you are it's what you've got to do which is important — find the three pillars of time (past, present, future) secreted about the spaceship by the devious moron captain. Some very useful abbreviations are described on the cover including G for GET, T for TAKE, and O for OPEN — commands so useful I found myself still trying to use them on the next adventure reviewed, to no avail!

Oh, so that's where you are, in a teleport in the good old UK. You collect the torch and spacesuit, which is automatically worn (checked by looking up your inventory with I). Since you are told the teleport button is marked 'press', and no other direction is allowed, it seems the only way forward is to press it. 'Everything is dark' is the result but getting the right words to get the torch on isn't half a struggle. The unfriendliness here took my mind back to the days when you just slung any old illogical couplings at an adventure until it gave in and let you through. The pictures which accompany the first few frames are rudimentary, but passable for £1.99.

Onto the flight deck and we have a situation so simple it's either a parody of stuffy adventures or a parody of pathetic adventures (a bit like 'Ever Decreasing Circles' on TV which is so sparse and deadpan it borders on being funny). Here we have a red button, a yellow lorry, I mean button, a green button, a blue button, and of course a lever. Two of these buttons turn force fields off, one normally turns the lights on (but the fuse is missing) and another starts the ship's self destruct sequence. I'll leave you to find out which causes what to happen!

The lever, naturally enough, is stuck. There is indeed yet another option at this stage; pressing the teleport button once more, but this simply has you ending the game without any of the pillars of time—and a score of zero percent.

Shortly, a moron appears, welcomes you aboard the ship and offers the assistance of his colleagues who'll help whenever they can. So, it's just the captain who's a villain; a reassuring thought this. Unfortunately, there are other nasties willing to make up for the moron's hospitality — like the wolves who make a meal of you unless you deal with them within a very few moves. But wait a minute, perhaps the moron crew aren't so friendly. They later ask you to stay for lunch and then nearly forget to tell you that you may be on the menu!

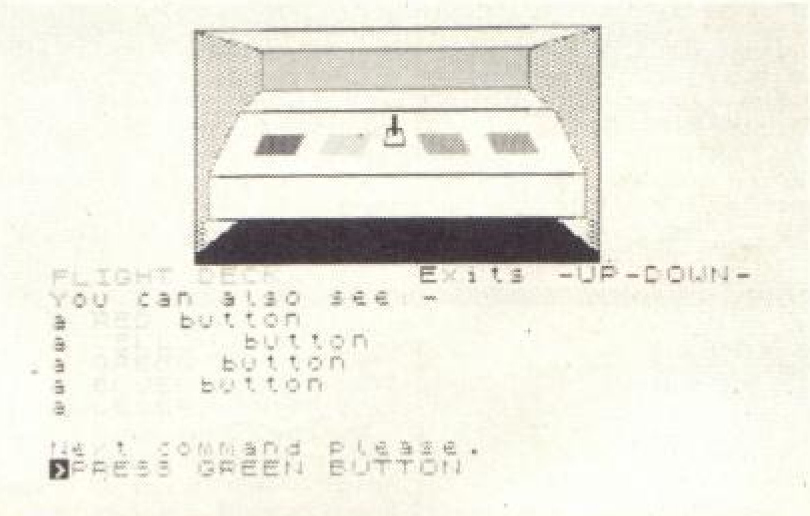
In the limited time I had to play this game I never quite got on top of the wolves. There is a great deal of spaceship to explore in the few moves the wolves allow you. There are the upper, middle and lower transit bays, and the recreational area at the very bottom. On this lowest level I tried locking myself variously in the steel telephone box and the wolves' cage itself without success, the wolves always miraculously getting to me to munch my bones to calcium biscuits. Even the laser rifle and grenade from the armoury on the lower transit level didn't provide much help — I only succeeded in blowing myself up with the grenade! Still it's nice for a change to leave a review with a puzzle to whet the player's appetite.

For £1.99 *Moron* has some nice touches and I really enjoyed playing it.

Difficulty: not difficult
Graphics: neat
Presentation: pleasant
Input facility: v/n
Response: *Quill*
General rating: fun

Atmosphere	82%
Vocabulary	65%
Logic	78%
Addictive quality	85%
Overall	**80%**

On the bridge of the good ship MORON — now which button should you avoid pressing?



RETURN TO OZ

Producer: **US Gold**
Price: £7.99
Authors: KAOS

Now if you think Oz is a rather down to earth character from an ITV comedy show, then this software is not aimed at you. No, it is aimed at a younger audience, who, enthralled by tales of the original (starring Greta Garbo ... errr, that can't be right errr ... Elizabeth Taylor, well, someone incredibly famous) from their mums, rushed out to see the recent remake starring someone equally unforgettable. It all began with an Elton John album entitled 'Goodbye Yellow Brick Road' which was so good (not to mention long) that a chap who worked at Disneyland, called Walter, thought he'd base a film around the album. That's where Shirley Temple and Zena Ravioli (her stuntgirl) came in, child pawns pushed forward in the limelight totally unsuspecting the deeper meanings to the Bernie Taupin lyrics of the filmscores; hence its cult following. (Facts courteousy of the YTS information bureau).

Now, as I've said, this one is for the kids, which should be obvious to anyone who looks at the cover as it has KIDS! plastered all over it. Generally the program works very well for its intended audience, with the need for text input replaced by a menu bar accessed by pressing ENTER when the SPACE key has highlighted the option required. Slightly more clever is the way objects in the pictures can be highlighted with the SPACE key. The main options are LOOK, TALK, SEARCH, GET, LIST, and LEAVE.

LOOK is really very effective and gives the young varmint playing the game a full low down on what the SPACE key has highlighted right there up on the screen. For example the first screen only tells you that you are in the farm yard looking for Billina. But using LOOK we see that this scene has much to offer and teach us. There is Aunt Em, some good white hens which lay their eggs every day, and (after SEARCHing the wooden coop) Billina, which is a beautiful golden coloured hen, which hasn't laid an egg for ages. If she can't provide



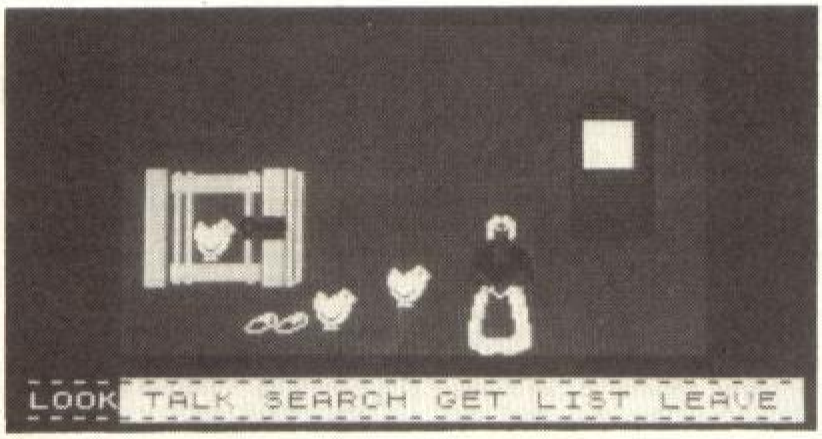
the eggs for breakfast then she'll end up providing the meat for supper. (And this is where Colonel Saunders, head of the US Allied forces, got his idea for naming his fast foods, after the state where Dorothy in the film loses her marbles — YTS Info Service).

TALK is another useful command where you can while away many happy moments conversing (with various degrees of success) with the various straw-headed flower pots you get in these kind of stories and thereby learn much about your quest and the routes you should follow (sadly, the Yellow Brick Road, like a present day M1 has long ago cracked up and you'll soon meet diversion signs). LIST leads onto the sub-options of DROP and USE.

I have one major complaint to level at this program so let's get it over with here: some of the printing is bugged with print split at line ends and some lines begin with full stops. Now if you consider the age group this game is aimed at these errors take on quite some significance.

Anyway, let's finish this one with the official version of the story, to rubbish all that disinformation from the YTS Info Service.

You find it difficult to sleep. All you can think about is Oz. The wonderful world of Oz. The Tin Woodman and the Cowardly Lion and the Scarecrow. All your friends from magical Oz, where anything can happen if you want it badly enough. 'Oh, why did I wear the magic Ruby Slippers and wish to be home in Kansas?', you think quietly to yourself. If only you could find those slippers and wish yourself back to Oz. But every day, the same, you search in vain. 'Kansas', you say to yourself. It's not quite as exciting here on the farm as it was in Oz. You can't even mention the word 'Oz' without making your Aunt Em and Uncle Henry upset and angry. But something is wrong in Oz. You know it. Today is going to be different, though, you are going to find a way to Return to Oz.



Aunt Em who looks after Cameron when he plays RETURN TO OZ. Aaah!

Don't know about you, but I preferred the YTS Info Service version.

Difficulty: not all child's play
Graphics: attractive
Presentation: very good
Input facility: menu system
Response: fast
General rating: very competent

Atmosphere	75%
Vocabulary	88%
Logic	86%
Addictive quality	82%
Overall	**84%**

HRH

Producer: **8th Day**
Price: £6.95

At last, 8TH DAY SOFTWARE have gone all hip-hop and commercial (like) with this offering which mercilessly lampoons the royal beings.

As Britain has slid into a rather sorry state, the daily trashy papers have nothing more to concern themselves with than the boring everyday machinations of the royal beings. Some of the columns are a bit personal in the press, others affectionate, while others still make satirical mileage out of the royals' peculiarly detached aloofness, a family apart. This game is certainly of the latter category, so if you're the type who goes fishing when there's a Royal Wedding on the telly then *HRH* will be right up your street, even if it's just a row of crumbling terraces.

The cover illustration is a one penny stamp depicting a po-faced monarch with her two index fingers pointed in a most unbecoming fashion. God Save Our Gracious Queen rings out on loading with a screen which is by appointment to her majesty's bodyguards. But this is only an introduction to the humour which begins with the storyline. It's Wednesday morning and, sitting hunched beneath the letter box waiting for your dole giro, you rummage through an ash tray for a last remaining dog end. After what seems like an eternity the letter arrives. Hallelujah! Eagerly ripping open the DHSS envelope you clutch the giro to your heaving chest, gibbering uncontrollably.

Inside the telephone box — give Andy a bell down in the nightclub and pass on the news. . . .



Regaining your composure you notice with a gasp of horror that it isn't your name on the giro. Thunderstruck you rack your brain for a local pub called the Queen Elizabeth . . . until, that is, you notice the address.

The giro slips to the floor, the long line of zeros on it staring accusingly up at you, like Princess Margaret after you've nicked her last bottle of brown ale. It looks as if you've got the Queen's giro, surely she must have yours? Will she have to resort to selling the corgis to MacDonalds to pay for a new chainsaw for Prince William's birthday present..? How is she going to have meals on wheels for the Queen Mother..? And how are you going to pull off handing over a giro with the Queen's insignia on it?

Hoping to save the threatened dignity of our most gracious monarch, and perhaps making a bob or two selling your story to the press, you see yourself being knighted as you hand the Queen her dole money . . .

This game is *Quill*ed and *Illustrator*ed but makes up for its cloned look with a redesigned character set — light on a dark background so its easy to read. Of course the main interest to the game is the humour directed at the royal persons. I think this game's really got something here, as it is well-written and the jokes are well-executed. Quoting the first location may sometimes seem a little too easy but with this game it's well worth while as it is pivotal to the first part of the adventure. 'You are before a small post office counter in a long queue. Standing behind you is Princess Diana waiting for her family allowance. Through a door to the south heavy traffic can be heard moving along the high street. Prince William wears a set of enormous rubber ears upon his head. They sway wildly from side to side as he runs madly about impersonating an aeroplane'.

From this first frame you will see that the royal persons mix quite freely with you in the streets of London, although you must negotiate your way into Buckingham Palace to meet the really aloof ones. Prince William, however, is too young to stand on ceremony, and he snatches the giro from your hand before you've had the time to cash it in. And so begins your task to wrest the giro from the little darling's hands in order to give the Queen her money, but the road to achieving this is amazingly convoluted.............and fun.

There are not that many graphics in this adventure; I can only remember seeing one (the Telecon Box) in the first part of the gameand it would be more honest to consider it a text adventure. The Telecon Box is reached across a zebra crossing which is traversed only when the beeping stops — thanks to the constraints of the program. Never mind, the program allows you across and you hear the telephone ringing. Answering it starts a recurring chain of events which have you telling Andrew in Rocksoffs nightclub about the various states of his girlfriends in regards to their being in the family way. I particularly liked this part for its inventiveness and humour, qualities which run through the whole adventure. Just a little further on you negotiate the London buses. Very often a change from one route to another is required to get you on to your destination with the EXAMINE command telling you which bus number has pulled up at the bus stop. You will notice around the road area a lot of repetitive car honking which becomes a bit of a bore to read every time but it wouldn't be an adventure without some irritant.

HRH is a really funny adventure. It is long (after quite some time I got the Rule Brittania ending tune and a miserly score of 5 out of a possible 250), well-written, and sufficiently devious to hold your attention for hours at a time. Available mail order from 8TH DAY SOFTWARE, 18 Flaxhill, Moreton, Wirral L46 7UH.

Difficulty: pretty tricky in places
Graphics: very few
Presentation: neat, if unimaginative
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: fast *Quill* response
General rating: very funny and well constructed

Atmosphere	**86%**
Vocabulary	**80%**
Logic	**83%**
Addictive quality	**86%**
Overall	**85%**


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SIGN STUMPS

Another record postbag for SIGNSTUMPS with the most popular queries, once again, centering around* THE BOGGIT, KENTILLA *and* SEABASE DELTA. *Before we start with the queries* S Holland *from Bolton provides an answer to an unsolved problem in the September issue:

"Christopher Manley from Norwich wants to know how to pass the Shadow gate. Please tell him he must WEAR CLOAK which he should have GOT when he got the crown after speaking to the Baron. He must get the cloak before he gets the crown as the game moves on as soon as the crown is taken. Tell him also that when facing the Shadow gate, HELP may help him."

Tom Wheatcroft *from Birmingham is having trouble with* TERRORMOLINOS *and writes:*

"The stepladder doesn't want to co-operate with me — I keep breaking my neck when trying to use it. I have collected everything except the suitcase and camera. Please tell me how to use the stepladder."

To make the stepladder safe you will need to MPDL TUFQ.

On the same game* N S Christensen *from Denmark is having difficulty finding the passport.

Try FYBNJOF TFUUFF.

Andrew Dowd *of York is stuck on the very popular* BOGGIT *and asks:*

"Can I enter the Trolls' cave, the one with the locked stone door, and if so how?
How do I escape from the Goblins' dungeon? Do I need the useless, curious key?
How can I escape from the Elven Hall? The butler hassles me a lot. Do I need to use the coffin?
How do I open the magic door near here?"

You can enter the Trolls' cave using the stone key. To get the key you will need to turn the Trolls to putty by TBZ MVY. In the Goblin Dungeon EJH TBOE then TNBTI USBQEPPS, after you have created some light UISPX SPQF until it catches on the window, then QVMM SPQF. Escape from the Elven Hall is roughly the same as in* THE HOBBIT. *I don't know how to open the magic door.

Steven Murray *from Wigan writes:*

"I recently purchased SEABASE DELTA and am having a few problems. I would appreciate it if you could answer the following questions. How do I get the chicken to lay an egg? How do I open the heavy metal sliding doors? How do I get the magnet? Where's the tape for the tape recorder? And finally, how do I get the plank nailed to the shipwreck?"

To get the chicken to lay an egg DIFX HVN then CMPX CVCCMF. The heavy metal tape can be found in the memory banks on level 3. As you have probably guessed by now, this is used to open the heavy metal doors. To get the magnet you will need the screwdriver, FYBNJOF MPVE TQFBLFS and VOTDSFX NBHOFU. To get the plank from the shipwreck you will need to QVMM OBJMT XJUI QJODFST.

Jamie Cork *in Stoke Poges, Bucks is having difficulty with* ATLANTIS*'s very popular* MAFIA CONTRACT II *and writes:*

"In MAFIA CONTRACT II I'm having trouble getting past the security fence. One time I tried cutting it with the cutters but found 1000 volts flowing through me. If you go a different way there is a brick wall and I cannot get past that either, and also if you bump into the guard dogs they chomp you to bits. What is the cold meat for and also when you are in the car is there any way of avoiding a crash?"

You can avoid being chomped by the dogs if you UISPX NFBU to them. You can now TIPPU QBEMPDL. Now get the HMPWFT and XFBS them. You can now safely cut the fence.

No adventure trail would be complete without more tips on* KENTILLA, *and as I have received twelve more queries this month it's only right that I answer a couple.* J Li *from Bootle Merseyside writes:

"I would be grateful if you could reveal the answers to the following questions:
1) What use is the large glowing crystal?
2) What use is the Emerald which shows strange images?
3) Where is the Fireshield?
4) What use is the metal rod found in the Trolls' lair?
5) Of what significance is the Shadow creature?
6) How do you get past the Glowing Ward? I have tried hitting it with Velnor's Staff but the computer replies Nothing Happens!
7) Is there an easier way of getting past the large troll in the Black Tower? I usually end up dead!"

Several of your questions are related. For example Nos 1 and 7. The crystal can be used to store up sunlight which of course has a detrimental effect on the health of Trolls. Try examining the emerald in a dark place to find the magic word to activate the staff. The fire protection scroll is being guarded by the dragon (sorry!).

Further on in the same game* S Ford *from Hassocks, West Sussex is having difficulty progressing past the natural cave below the Demonic Idle.

To find some assistance FYBNJOF EFCSJT.

Alan Sutton *of Woodley is yet another victim of a rather difficult* THE HELM *and writes:*

"Please help me, it's THE HELM from FIREBIRD. I am stuck in the wilds, I get the key from the river, unlock the shed, get the plank and cross the gorge. Then it gets hard as I keep ending up in the wilderness. Where am I going wrong?"

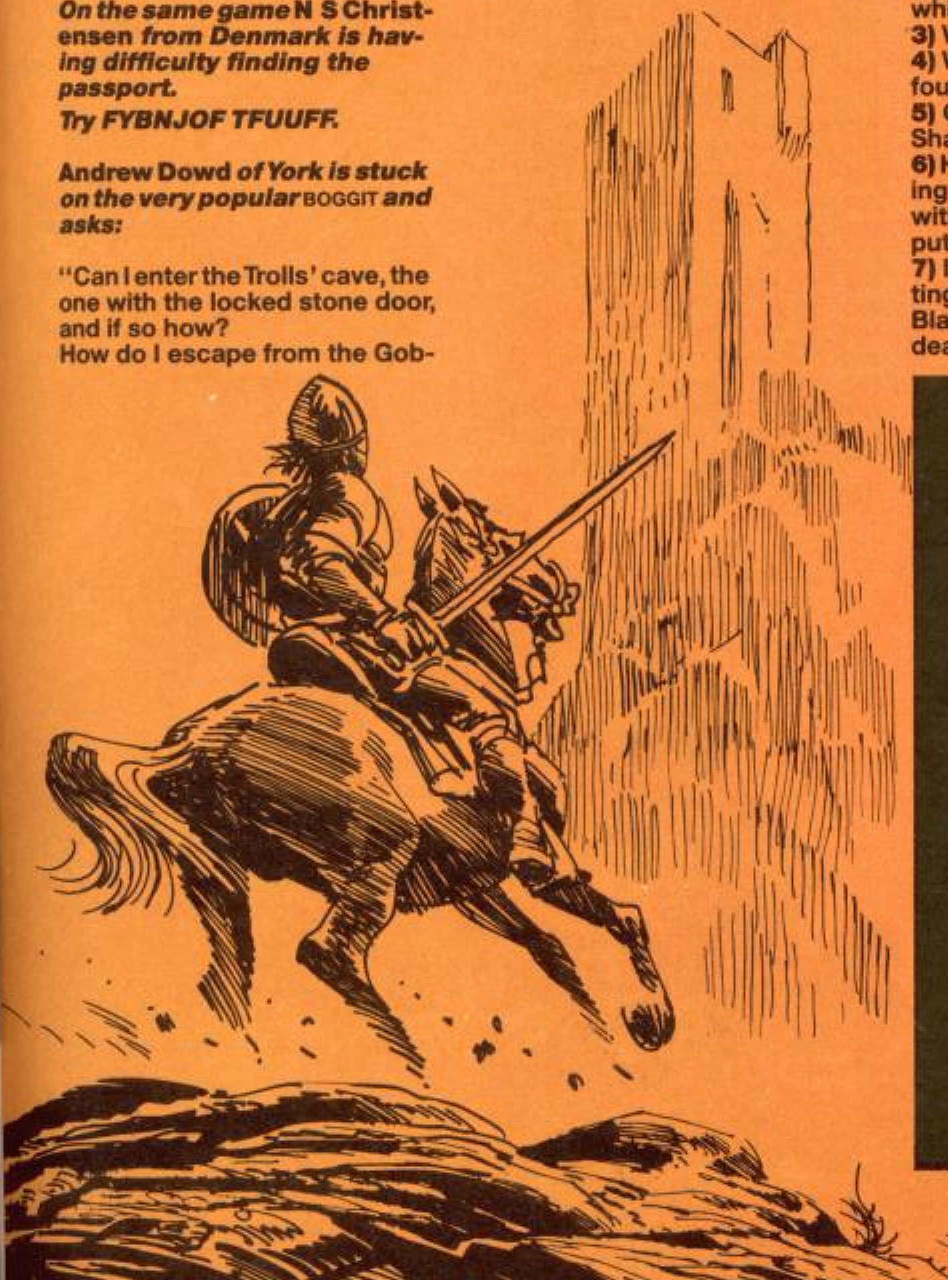
You shouldn't enter the wilderness, but should cross the swamp instead. You can use the same plank that was used to cross the gorge.

That's about all the room there is for another month. Send any questions you have as well as any help you can offer to:

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SUPERHEROES

This month's leading SUPERHERO competition is over the* MASTERTRONIC *game,* MASTER OF MAGIC, *and the undoubted winner is* Sean Doran *from Belfast. Sean's winning date was August 4 (at 2.30 in the morning to be precise). He confirms,
"When you drop the Amulet of Pedestal, you see the following message: A sudden flash of crimson light. Thelric appears, he says 'Thank you for saving my life. I will now return you to your own world! Fare ye well'. ***Just beaten into second was* Chris Hunt *(Aug 5) and the laggers were* R Davy *(Aug 13) and* M Bailey *(Aug 21).***
On Sep 5 at 3.16pm* HUNCHBACK III *fell to* A Burgess *of Cheshire when he killed the cardinal and ran off with Esmerelda over the rooftops of gay Paris to live happily everafter.* PLAYERS *game* SHREWSBURY KEY *was completed on Aug 14 at 8pm. When the game is finished you enter your name and a screen is saved which is a kind of certificate saying you have finished.
If I'm not mistaken we haven't had a* VERY BIG CAVE ADVENTURE SUPERHERO *(and if I am mistaken then it's just tough). The accolade here goes to* John Wilson *of Rochdale (Sat July 19) who is a regular if ever there was one.
See you next month.



Quite a mixed bag this month. There's some more info on two old favourites:* SHERLOCK *and* THE FOURTH PROTOCOL. *Added to these letters are another adventure vocabulary routine, some queries on* GAC *the new adventure creator, an adventure I somehow misplaced which has now come back to haunt me, the ultimate bug found in a* PSS *game, and a chappie who thinks I might want to change my mind over awarded CRASH Smashes. Well, all I can say is I'll follow the mores of the times and say 'The Trail's not for turning'.

ZIPPY ROUTINE

Dear Derek,
You printed a BASIC 'search code for vocabulary' program a while back. I've knocked a machine code version up for you and it is a million times faster than BASIC; try it and you'll never use BASIC again. Type it in and save to tape by running the program. Reset computer, load code of your game, load my routine, and then RANDOMIZE start of game: **LET a = USR 23296.**

```
10 RESTORE : FOR n = 23296
TO 23334 : READ a : POKE n,a
: NEXT n
20 DATA 205, 107, 13, 62, 2,
205, 1, 22, 237, 75, 118, 92,
33, 0, 0, 237, 66, 229, 197, 63,
10, 254, 31, 56, 5, 254, 127,
48, 1, 215, 193, 225, 3, 43,
124, 181, 32, 235, 201
30 SAVE "search" CODE
23296, 40 : PRINT "Rewind to
verify" : VERIFY "search"
CODE
```

Good eh? Because the code's in the printer buffer it won't interfere with the adventure, so once you've finished, just call the adventure in the normal way.

Ben Hanson, Totnes, Devon

PROTOCOL AT THE BARBICAN

Dear Derek,
I thought that readers would find directions in the Barbican, FOURTH PROTOCOL, useful. When you emerge from the Barbican tube station go north. If you now LOOK you'll find a theatre. From there go N,E,E when you can talk to a guard. Then N,W,S,E where you'll meet a florist and can buy the flowers for Blodwyn! Then N,N,W,E — another guard, then S,N,S,N,W where you'll find a tramp — talk to him! Finally go W,E when you LOOK to find yourself in a newsagents. Talk to enable yourself to buy a guide. Using this will then automatically transport you back to the tube. And you've successfully negotiated your way around the Barbican.

Further to *Mark Whatling*'s query in CRASH, issue 25. I too crashed the program when travelling west after a few moves. It would seem that this is some sort of 'bug', but if my directions are followed it is possible to avoid the crash.

Don Markwick, Eastbourne

MORE QUESTIONS THAN ANSWERS

Dear Derek,
I am happy to be an owner of the brilliant GAC (why did the FRONTLINES guy review it?) and have nearly finished an adventure. Now I have started on the graphics — they are good whilst black and white — but when I start to colour them in — they just clash, the colours, that is.

I know about the Spectrum's stupid colour problems, though there are a few tricks I have learned to help me. What I want to know is whether the SUNSET Video Digitizer can help?
1 Can it be combined with GAC? Or will it only run on its own? 2 Can the pictures be coloured, or just black and white? 3 Will the graphics really be lifelike, or just expensive rubbish?

Please print this letter as I need the answers.

A Taylor, Surrey.

I'm sorry to say that you won't be able to use the* SUNSET *Digitizer with* GAC *as it simply generates a full screen picture in non-compressed form. Four of these pictures would take up the entire memory of the 48K Spectrum. I would guess that the results couldn't really be any more than monotone due to the Spectrum's attribute limitations — although there's nothing to stop you trying to add limited colour to the digitized pictures.

DB

BLUE MURDER

Dear Derek,
You may or may not recall receiving a certain QUILLed adventure entitled MURDER. In all possibility you have not played it. PLEASE DO! You may like it — though it is, I admit, far from perfect.

Anyway, from reading carefully your wonderful adventure section (oh dear, a bad sign — resorting to crawling) and making copious notes (have tried to pack in a lot of features ie long location descriptions, good EXAMINE function, colourful inventory, realistic object start locations), and new features (alibi, info). These were derived from all those several page-long letters on 'My Perfect Adventure'. I have put as many in as allowed by the limitations of THE QUILL (superb), though with GAC coming out I may consider a purchase. You seem to agree with these letters so perhaps the game may rise in your estimation? Hope so.

I also read that you wished more adventure companies would send in maps of their games, your wish is my command as you can now see. Derek, in the unlikely event of your reviewing the game, don't forget this — the game's price is still £2 (cheque, PO) and if the fast loader fails, try the normal load side.

WALLSOFT, 10 Wheatlands Park, Redcar, Cleveland TS10 2PD

I'm glad you wrote to me as I remember reading a favourable review of your game somewhere and thought to myself, 'I'm sure I received a game like that'. The likely scenario is that I received your game during a particularly busy month, it wouldn't load, I put it to one side, and moved house leaving it heaven knows where. (The fact that I received a game with a very similar title to confuse your game with didn't help).

There's some general advice here for any company submitting programs to this column. Ease of loading is very important; providing two versions recorded using different cassette recorders (and therefore head alignments) on each side of the cassette is a useful device to prevent frustration on the part of the reviewer. In this respect the small company has an advantage over the larger concern which only has time to zip off standard copies of their games. One last tip for small companies — any magazine which doesn't review your game after favourable responses in rival mags should be sent another copy — this usually jogs the memory and does the trick.

DB

THE ULTIMATE BUG

Dear Derek,
From Christmas 84/85 I have enjoyed Spectrum games, being restricted previously to the school's RML 380Z, and also the odd dabbling with machine code, and have sampled arcade conversions, arcade adventures and have finally fallen for borderline adventuring/strategy/you've-had-a-lot-of-letters-about-it via the freebie you get with a Currah Speech and a budget-priced SHERLOCK. (*??DB*). After running up against the coded letters in SHERLOCK, I concentrated on MYSTIC TOWER (CURRAH Speech game) and from there progressed to OUT OF THE SHADOWS and it is about this I am primarily writing.
1) Why in the dungeons does exciting via some doors cause crashing which therefore leads to much saving?
2) Is there a level below the one populated by dragons, balrogs and spiders as in my quest (8-Sceptre among Demons) I can't find the respective creature?

After playing OOTS for a while I, deciding it was the next logical step, bought S&S even though I knew it to be slightly bugged. However I have mixed emotions about this game. Despite the fact I couldn't get used to the awkward, annoying control system, I felt it was in essence a good idea (note I didn't say game) so I persisted, established a powerfullish magical character and used about 70 lives to clear quadrant one, then the bugs stepped in — items vanished off lists (not picking up a a magical item which disappears the lot, I had got fly for that) monsters being reincarnated and also the ultimate bug which has reduced S&S to a quiet, dusty corner. Because I was laden with goods and moving very slowly I decided to cache them in a newly conquered quad two room, only to find that when I scrolled the inventory list to the last object the game went crazy. I discovered I was holding objects such as 'dismembered', 'Zob', 'Fluddit' and when I pressed select the game either crashed, propelled me to someplace else, or returned to the game as normal only to crash when it felt like it. To say the least I'm disappointed and £10 out of pocket.

Gordon Waddell, Kilsyth

SMASH FLASHES

Dear Mr Brewster,
Although you didn't write the articles in question, *Pete Tamlyn*'s thoughts on 'Role Playing on Computer' have proved to be extremely interesting — mainly because I agreed with his comments! In particular, he mentions SWORDS & SORCERY and HEAVY ON THE MAGICK. Both games were awarded Smashes in your column and yet when I re-read your reviews on them recently I came to the conclusion that you preferred S&S over MAGICK. Am I correct in this assumption? I ask because I agreed with Mr Tamlyn when he states severe disappointment over PSS's game and praise for GARGOYLE's which has so far been the nearest thing in feel (if not execution) to true role playing games. DARK SCEPTRE sounds like it too will achieve this much sought after atmosphere.

On the subject of previous Smashes, do you still feel that the grand epic LORD OF THE RINGS deserved this accolade? I found the game slow, bug ridden, lacking atmosphere and ultimately boring. Many other magazines awarded it their highest prize but are now criticising it. If only *Philip Mitchell* and his team would look at the quality of LEVEL 9 games before they start on Part Two. It's because of them that I sympathise with *Mr Barnes* SHERLOCK complaint in Issue 32. In fact, I don't think *Philip Mitchell* should write Part 2 at all. The Inglish parser is badly outdated and if they're going to have graphics — do them properly!

Richard Hewison, Luton

You shouldn't compare reviews in different issues as you can easily be led to the wrong conclusion.* HEAVY ON THE MAGICK *was reviewed a couple of months after* S&S *and in my opinion is better. I still like* LORD OF THE RINGS *but it has many flaws like speed, bright background and bugs which are inexcusable. Unless part 2 improves on part 1 in these respects I think a Smash is most unlikely.

DB

SHERLOCK SOLVED

The main thing to bear in mind is that everything important must be examined. As soon as the game starts tell Watson to follow you, get the oil lamp, open plain door and go north. Wear chinaman's disguise, then take it off. Do the same with the old man's disguise, then leave house and take a cab to King's Cross Road. Catch the 9.15 train from Platform 3 to Leatherhead.

Go to Chief Constable Straker. Follow him to the female corpse. Closely examine Bridge and corpse. Say to Lestrade 'Brown killed herself'. He will ask for proof but don't worry over this. Examine the note, follow Straker until you reach Basil and Daphne and wait until Lestrade has questioned both of them before asking Basil 'Tell me your address'. Follow Straker to the kitchen, watch while Lestrade questions the servants, then say to Cook 'Tell me about Basil'. Follow Straker to the body and closely examine the bookcase, go west, get the clothes and examine them. Then go east, examine the body, and go to Jones's front gate, waiting for Lestrade and Straker to arrive. Follow Lestrade back to the library and listen to Ffoulkes's story. Follow Lestrade back to the front gate, then Straker back to the kitchen. Listen to the description of Ffoulkes and follow Straker back to Basil and Daphne. Ask Daphne 'Tell me about Tricia'. Follow Straker back to Jones's front gate. Follow Lestrade to Scotland Yard.

Catch a cab to Sidmouth Street but do not get out. Instead wait for Ffoulkes to arrive. He will go into his house and come out again, then hail a cab and travel to Slater Street. When you arrive, pay the cabbie, get out, wear the chinaman's disguise and go north. Take off the disguise and listen to Ffoulkes's confession, then go south and wait for Lestrade. When he arrives say to Lestrade 'Ffoulkes is innocent, Ffoulkes visited the opium den' twice, then return to Leatherhead.

Go to Cobden Lane, enter Basil's house, and open the safe. Get the letters and examine them. Go upstairs and examine the piano and gramophone. Closely examine the bed and window. Now enter Mrs Brown's house, go upstairs and through the wooden door. Open and closely examine the drawer, open the false bottom to retrieve a note and bank account book. Examine both. Return to station, go to platform one; wait for Lestrade. At some stage Basil should pass, but don't take any notice. Say to Lestrade 'Tricia blackmailed Brown'. Don't worry about the lack of evidence. Go south, follow Straker to the east side, examine the stream and Lestrade will now believe Mrs Brown killed herself. Go to platform two and catch the 10:45 train to Kings Cross. Catch a cab to Portman Street and go to Tricia Fender.

On arrival open the safe and get the unfinished note and folder and examine them. Say to Tricia 'Tell me about the clothes' and tell Mrs Jones to follow you. Catch a cab to Parliament Street and go to Scotland Yard. Say to Lestrade 'Tricia blackmailed Brown', 'Tricia had the plans', 'Jones killed Tricia'. He will ask for evidence. Give him the clothes and ask him to examine them.

Say to Jones 'Tell Lestrade about the clothes', then say to Lestrade 'Jones killed Tricia' and he will believe you. Now head for Camden Street, go east and wear the chinaman's disguise. Wait until 10:06 and go northeast. Do not stay in Basil's house too long! Go to the library and get the note. Examine it but don't trouble yourself with the decoding. Go to the backyard and closely examine the trashpile. Get note and examine it. Go back to Watson and take off the disguise. At 10:06 go northeast, get the note and examine it. Catch a cab to Parliament Street, go east, and say to Lestrade 'Basil Phipps has the plans', 'The sale location is the Old Mill Road'.

Now follow Lestrade until you reach Old Mill Road. Basil and the German agent are there but if you stay in the police cab, Lestrade takes no notice and lets them get away. So, as soon as you get there, say to policeman 'Furiously go to Main Street'. When you arrive back in Leatherhead waste no time in going to the station. Do not worry about Basil and the German agent — you can't deal with them yet. Follow Lestrade until he hails a cab, then climb into it. Before Lestrade can say where he wants to go, say to cabbie 'Go to Buckingham Palace Road'. When you get there wait until Lestrade enters and arrests the culprit.

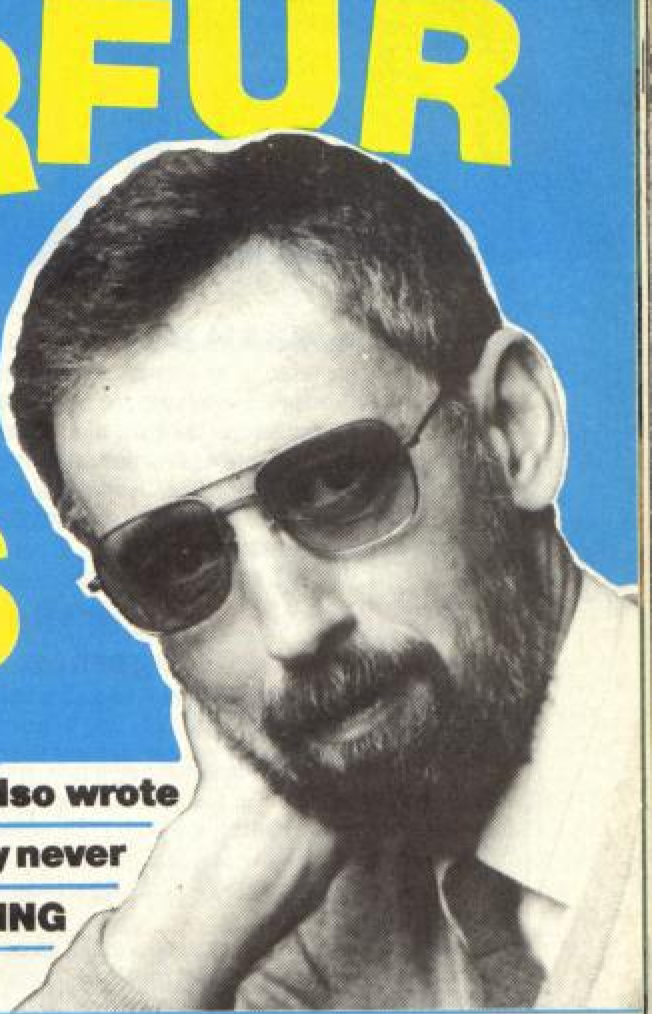
P J Fairweather, Exeter




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TERRY, ARFUR AND 'IM UPSTAIRS



Don Priestley wrote the weird and wonderful Trapdoor. **He also wrote Minder, Popeye, and a few other games which you've probably never heard of, but which were classics in their time. BILL SCOLDING talks to him, and travels back to the future**

Look. There's this big blue furry monster called Berk, and he lives in a castle. He spends his time feeding 'im upstairs, and trundles around his dank and gloomy kitchen collecting the fried slimeys or worms or squashed eyeballs that his master demands. And there's a large trapdoor covering a subterranean zone where nasties of every shape and size lurk. Berk doesn't get on too well with some of these.

It sounds exactly like some of those cute little games which featured stunted animals climbing up and down levels and ladders, and which sank without trace about two years ago. The kind of game which now gets crucified whenever it inadvisedly raises its cute little head.

Berk, however, didn't get crucified. Maybe it was something to do with those huge animated sprites, with not a hint of colour clash, smoothly rolling around the screen. Maybe it was the ingenious problems posed, asking you to think laterally as well as logically. And maybe it was just the plot itself, bizarre in the extreme, and the well-rounded character of Berk, with all his endearing clumsiness.

Whatever. *Trapdoor*, the exploits of Berk, got astounding reviews right across the board, with CRASH almost Smashing it with 88 per cent — surprising enthusiasm for a game which is based on a kids' TV series, and could be mistaken for an under-fives educational program.

And probably no-one's more surprised than its author, Don Priestley, who's been cheerfully ignoring lukewarm reviews for the last year or two, all the while refining a graphics style that has become a personal trademark.

LONG IN THE TOOTH

Like the games he writes, Don is far removed from the public's conception of what a programmer should be. Gangly and bearded, he looks like one of those people that hangs around science fiction conventions. He is also, well, *old*. 'I have been described in the press as,' he pauses, 'a pensioner. Well, I'm not, though I am getting a bit long in the tooth. Not long enough, however, to worry about it.'

Neither is he, as you might imagine, an ageing systems programmer who tinkers with home computers for light relief. Until 1979 Don was a teacher, and he first saw a computer in 1981. It was just about then that Clive Sinclair was beginning to bring technology to the masses, and Don thought that his teenage son ought to learn something about this new science which, as he puts it, 'was no longer the dabblings of a cracked minority'.

They both enrolled in a night school to acquaint themselves with programming in Pascal, and though his son dropped out after a month, Don stayed on, immersing himself in the abstract delights of developing a life-type program, one of those mathematical puzzles where an organism grows within memory according to a certain set of rules. Don's subsequent purchase of a ZX81 was simply to convert this program to BASIC.

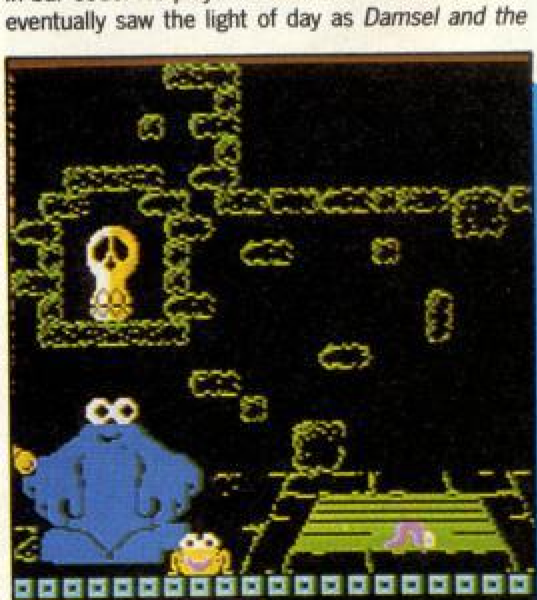
His first commercial game was the result of delving through the archives of the Lancashire Public Library, where he came across a program called *Mugwump*. In bar code. He played around with the idea, and it eventually saw the light of day as *Damsel and the Beast*, bought by BUG BYTE, a young company then in its ascendancy. Those of you who are almost as long in the tooth as Don might remember it.

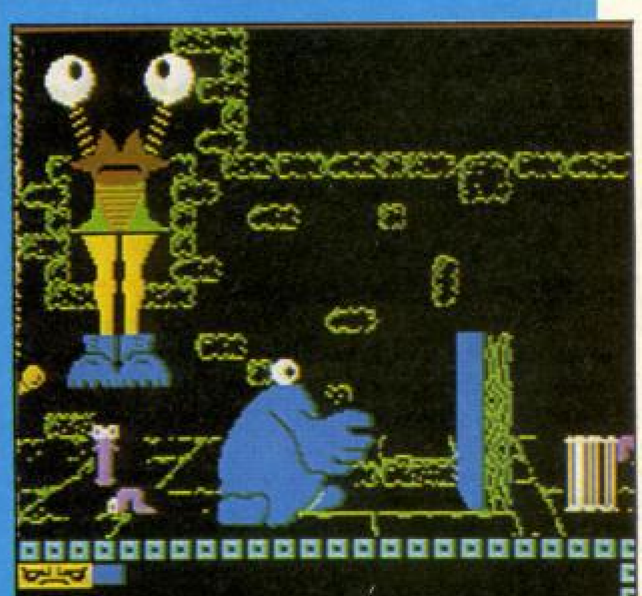
Don Priestley — A well-matured Big Cheese when it comes to TV tie-ins . . .

BYTTEN BY THE BUG

Don now began a brief but fruitful freelance association with BUG BYTE, which included the two classic ZX81 games, *Dictator* and *Mazogs*. *Dictator* was the first of the banana republic trading simulations which people went, um, bananas over in those heady days. It was later converted to run on other machines, and is still hailed as a minor masterpiece.

For those unfamiliar with the ZX81, it is perhaps difficult to see why *Mazogs* created the stir that it did, back in June '82. Don explains: 'I was trying to get





TERRY, ARFUR AN

away from all those games which revolved around a dollar sign being chased by an asterisk. *Mazogs* featured large mobile sprites in a solid maze, all constructed using Sinclair's sugar cube graphics. It was my first game which got itself a full page ad. **BUG BYTE** went over the top on that one ... ' The game was later converted to the Spectrum, and retitled *Maziacs*, published by **DK'TRONICS**.

"3D Tanx was one of the most successful games ever written"

The days of the ZX81 were numbered now, with everyone going do-lally over the Spectrum, and Don joined **DK'TRONICS** as a director, in March 1983, where he stayed for over a year, writing *3D Spawn of Evil* — 'too smart for its own good' — a 'bog-standard' *Meteoroids*, and *3D Tanx*.

'*3D Tanx* was one of the most successful games ever written,' says Don. 'It sold at high levels consistently over nearly 15 months, averaging about 5,000 a month. Levels unheard of now,' he adds, ruefully.

And then there was *Jumbly*. Remember *Jumbly*? Of course you don't. It was a sliding puzzle game, and even now Don still thinks of it with a sense of achievement. He remembers a letter in a magazine which went something like: 'Dear Ed, I've been playing *Jumbly* for three years and I've only completed five of the pictures ... ' 'At least one person got value for money,' Don laughs. 'I really thought it was good, but puzzle games are not too acceptable to the public, and it didn't do very well.'

Which brings us on to *Minder*.

THE WORLD'S YOUR LOBS TER

A game based on the most popular TV series since *Coronation Street* should have been a record-breaking hit. It wasn't. *Minder* landed like a blue whale dropped from eight miles high. A resounding flop.

Here's what one CRASH reviewer said about it, in June '85: '*I was disappointed. I found it difficult to get on with ... Time-consuming and annoying ... A tenner's a bit steep, ain't it?*' So, what went wrong?

'It got out of hand, there were too many things going wrong - in fact, the game was written twice.' Don elaborates, 'The whole structure of the game was built on sand, not rock. Short of tearing it down and replacing the foundations, there wasn't much I could do about it.'

As TV spin-offs go, though, *Minder* wasn't too awful. Unlike many other games written around licensed titles, bearing little or no relation to the source material, *Minder* ambitiously attempted to translate typical plot, character likenesses and even language from the TV to the computer screen.

Don laughs again. 'That's fair praise. I was pleased with the format of the game, but I can also see what it should have been. The trouble is, a game like that really needs artificial intelligence, and I don't believe in AI. In order to get a machine to have AI you have to define intelligence, and that's rather like defining mood or personality.'







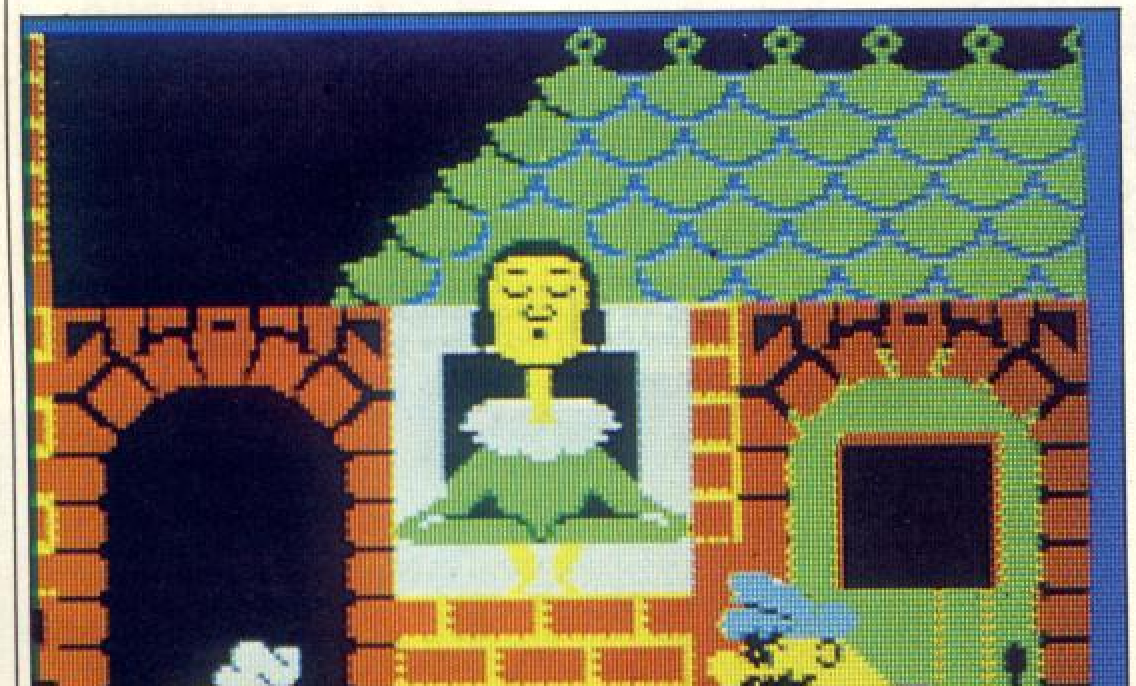
Don's next program for **DK'TRONICS** was another licence — *Popeye*— and suddenly it looked like the company had a chart-topper on its hands. Certainly, it woke up a few comatose games reviewers who'd fallen asleep over *Roland's Rat Race*, another TV-am spin-off.

The first thing reviewers noticed about *Popeye* — in fact, its main attraction — were the colossal graphics. Here's another CRASH reviewer, getting excited: '*For the first time masses of colour have been used and with no colour clash. I've never seen anything like it ... A very well finished game that proves even the impossible can be done with a clever bit of programming. Brilliant! Buy it to believe it.*' Not surprisingly, it got a CRASH Smash.

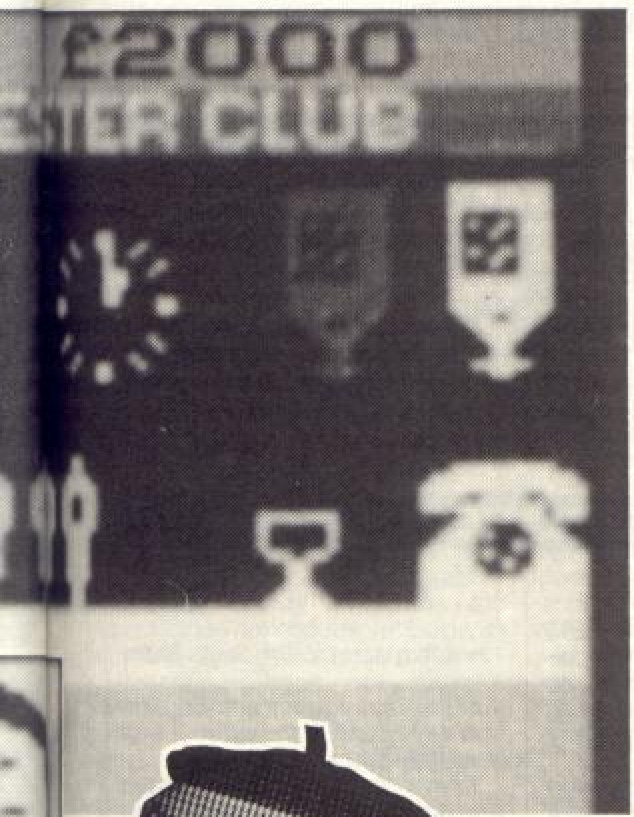
The game had been a long time coming, though, and more ads for it appeared in the twelve months previous to its release than after. Don fills in the background: 'a version of *Popeye* had been already written by A N Other, and it was duff — a platform and ladders game. I was asked to do it again.

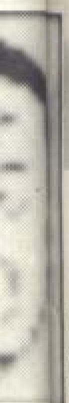
'The graphics happened by chance. The licensors, King Features — were at pains to point out that any game had to include fair representations of the central cartoon characters, so I sat down with a large grid and came up with a figure of *Popeye* which was seven characters high and six wide — 42 characters to move for each frame!

'I nearly abandoned it then. It was just too big! What could I do with it? The game really developed in the way it did because the figures were so big. I



ND 'IM UPSTAIRS







The second Don Priestley game to feature monster sprites, BENNY HILL'S MADCAP CHASE isn't exactly Don's favourite program.

found the reviews pleasantly surprising. Unfortunately, DK had lost interest in software by this time, and the bottom had fallen out of the market. They were ready enough to offer it to MACMILLAN.'

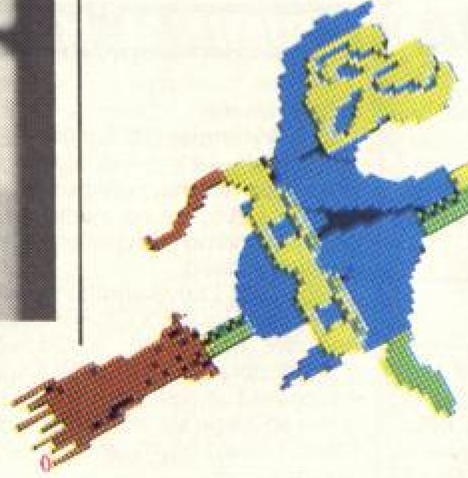
"The less said about Benny Hill the better"

Despite the ecstatic reviews, *Popeye* soon vanished from sight, to resurface recently in versions for the Amstrad and Commodore. By this time Don had left DK'TRONICS, though he was to write one more game for them, *Benny Hill's Madcap Chase*. 'But I don't want to talk about that,' grunts Don. Why not? 'The less said about *Benny Hill* the better.' Do you think it fails as a game or as a TV spin-off? Don pauses, 'Yes'.

THE TRAPDOOR OPENS

With *Trapdoor*, Don's latest game on the new MACMILLAN label PIRANHA, it looks as if he might, at last, have that elusive best-seller. It's yet another computer game based around a TV series, though in this case it's a series which has yet to appear, so if the game sells well now then it is doing so entirely on its own merits.

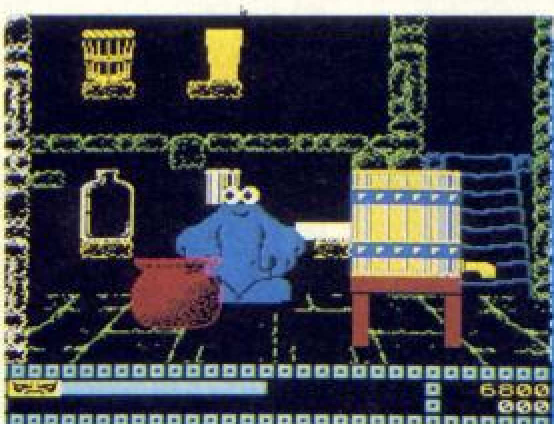
With three other TV titles under his belt, is Don getting a reputation for specialising in this field? 'Well, I'll have a reputation so long as I don't do too many *Benny Hills*. But yes, I suppose so, and I think *Trapdoor* will enhance that reputation.'



Converting successful formulae from one medium to another has its own advantages and disadvantages. Often Don is given a video to watch, and then he spends the next few weeks just walking around thinking about how best to capture the spirit of the programme in a computer game. Sometimes it's easier than others. 'The main character in *Trapdoor* was given to me on a plate. Berk was large, easy to draw, and best of all, he's entirely blue. He's almost exactly like the TV character. All the other monsters are mostly my own design.

'But the trouble with TV series is that they're essentially narrative, whereas arcade games are not. The end of a game is not an end, but a level of attainment. What I do is convert from narrative to competitive.'

"I think that Trapdoor will enhance my reputation"



The amiable blue Berk stomps around the castle cooking up goodies for 'im upstairs.

BIG HASSLES

Programming is an essentially lonely occupation, and Don spends much of his time shut away in the study of his Mortlake flat, often for 48 hours at a stretch, while the trains and planes pass noisily around and above him. 'It's a bit like being a novelist — you just have to get your head down and get on with it. Thank God, I still consider it a paid hobby.

'What drives me on is the mystery element — will this program work? Is it going to appeal? Will it be too easy, too difficult? I don't work from storyboards, but instead constantly change things while I'm programming. If you plan something from beginning to end then you fall into the trap of doing the same thing again and again — like Agatha Christie or Barbara Cartland.'

Don regards himself as a storyteller, dreaming up ideas. He maintains that he knows very little about the technical side of computers — 'all that's a big hassle to me' — and remembers reading articles about using interrupts and thinking 'What are these interrupts? Why does everybody keep talking about them?'

This results in a rigid technical censorship, and to overcome it, Don usually approaches other people. The music on *Trapdoor* was done by someone else, and all Don's protection routines are programmed by someone who then sends back a master-maker. He relies on a small clan of young users, who he's come to know over the years, to test and criticise his games. 'At the PCW show two more were recruited — they came up and asked for my autograph!'

Don's next game for PIRANHA is, for once, not a licensed TV tie-in, though it does include some characters which will be instantly recogniseable. Apparently the screen presentation is unusual, but he is unwilling to divulge any further details.

THE SURVIVOR

For all his technical shortcomings and advancing years, Don Priestley is a walking microcosm of the ever-changing software industry. His career spans the monochrome days of the limited but lovable ZX81, right through to the technicolour glory of today's bigger, cheaper, games machines. That he has survived, and produced both classic and innovative programs into the bargain, is a continual credit to his willingness to accept and overcome each new challenge.

Long may your teeth continue to grow, Don.

An early success for Mr Priestley. He still looks back on the monthly sales figures wistfully. . . .



PBM FORUM

Before I start this month's forum, I'd like to thank you all for the many letters I have received about PBM Football. Be sure to get next month's issue which will be full — well, nearly full — of football affirmation! Meanwhile, here's a selection of the past month's mailed goodies . . .



Here's another extra large portion of PBM news 'n' views. This month Brendon Kavanagh gets wind of the next PBM convention, samples some Arcadian delights, and still manages to talk diplomatically!

A JOURNEY TO ARCADIA

Arcadia is a computer moderated PBM wargame with strong fantasy and roleplaying features. Run by JADE GAMES on an Atari ST, *Arcadia*'s flexible software can hold up to 30 players who roleplay as tribe leaders in the land of Arcadia.

At the start of the game, you receive a large wall map of the Arcadian landscape. You must design your character and your tribe, and then choose your preferred starting place from any of the map's 1575 locations. Here the GMs will place your home city, which you must use and defend. The aim is to use diplomacy and your armies to capture the other players' cities, as well as the non player cities. No easy task, believe me!

ROCS

Existing in the game environment are 90 player armies (three per player), 30 player cities, several computer-controlled cities, many computer-controlled characters and armies (to befriend, if you can trust them!), wozums (friendly but rare birds used for spying and scouting), and the Rocs. Hmmm, the Rocs. Rocs are not very nice birds at all. Rocs are dim. Rocs are mean. Rocs read *BANG*. And when Rocs are hungry, Rocs eat wozums.

MAGIC

Magic exists in Arcadia in the form of ancient spells located in secret places about the land. Magic is a mysterious feature: it is very dangerous, powerful and rare. So be warned.

COMBAT

Being a fantasy wargame, combat is a major feature of *Arcadia*. Combat resolution is no simple task since the GM takes several things into account, such as your army design, magic and the season.

The army movement system is neat and efficient, allowing your armies to make detailed manoeuvres during any one turn. This makes multi-army battles very tactical indeed.

TRADE

As in most good PBM games, the clever use of trade can strengthen your armies and it can also help you gain alliances. If you make a weaker player than yourself reliant upon you for food, then there is little immediate danger of him suddenly stabbing you in the back. Trading is done by using your armies, which makes them rather handy.

CHEAP AT THE PRICE

Arcadia is a fairly low-priced PBM game to play and is proving quite popular in the UK. The startup package is very good by PBM standards and the game itself is great value: a Freepost address (no stamps needed for UK players), long printouts (later in the game being as long as 20 A4 sheets or more), and no hidden costs!

The four GMs of JADE GAMES are real enthusiasts who appears at many of the British FRP Games Days with their PBM and FRP service offerings. They ensure that *Arcadia* is a well run, fast moving and well thought out game which encourages diplomacy as well as strong tactics. If you are thinking of joining another PBM game, why not try it?

A startup in *Arcadia* costs £5.00, but CRASH readers who send JADE GAMES the voucher printed on this page can startup for only £3.50. This fee includes the rulebook, first move, poster, a 20x30 wall map, and two free turns. Turns cost £1.50 (including Freepost) thereafter. Write to **JADE GAMES, FREEPOST, PO Box 54, Southsea, Hants PO4 0BR** before December 31, 1986 to take advantage of this offer.

VERY INTERESTED . . . BUT

Dear Brendon
I was very interested when I read your first CRASH article on Play By Mail games. I would like to start PBMing but I don't know what I need, or which games to start with. Please help!
David Holdstock, Deal, Kent

Four crucial things needed to begin PBMing are: imagination; spare time (and plenty of it); a budget of at least £1 per week (depending upon the games you choose to play); and CRASH (the most important item!).

Most games are suitable for PBMers new and old, but if you first try the games that the PBM MAILBOX covers then you can't go wrong!
BK

CRIMINAL NEGLIGENCE

Dear Brendon
I am very impressed by the PBM MAILBOX — it's great! July's column gave me the incentive to join *Vorcon Wars*, game number 72, and I am finding this challenge very exciting indeed.

However, I have another reason for writing. In July's CRASH, I saw an offer to join *It's a Crime!*. I immediately sent a large stamped addressed envelope off to the given address; six weeks later I still haven't heard anything from either you or KJC.

In the September's CRASH you commented on the large response to the offer, and that a new game of *Crime!* was set up to accommodate it. Have you, I wonder, received my application?
Paul Harrison, Cardiff, South Wales

I'm glad that you are enjoying Vorcon Wars *and I wish you well with your megalomania!*

I have had a number of moans and groans about KJC GAMES' slow treatment of some CRASH Crime! *startups, so I have dropped them a note, tied round a brick, promising to fit their boys with concrete shoes if they don't get you all started up pronto. Me an' da boys reckon you'll hear something soon . . .*
BK

AT A DISADVANTAGE?

Dear Brendon
I have been reading your page in CRASH and it has been rather interesting (only rather?! — **BK**). I started playing game three of *It's a Crime* before your articles first appeared, and my gang — the Triads — has just entered it's 13th turn . . . I also play another KJC game, *Earthwood*. Which games do my fellow CRASH readers play in?

While wondering which game to join next, I read your article on *StarGlobe Four* and decided that this was the game for me. However, I feel that I will be at a disadvantage in SG 4 as a lot of the players will have experience of the earlier games. Can you give me some tips for starting out?
Kevin Pack, Higham Ferrers, North amptonshire

Don't let the more experienced players worry you: the GMs are very wary about experienced players picking on 'newbies'. It just doesn't happen, unless you really ask for it by declaring war on a large alliance! See next month's issue for StarGlobe Hints'n'Tips.
BK

PBM CONVENTION!

Yes, folks, it's here again (cue fanfare): the British PBM Convention. Loyal CRASH readers will remember that back in February of this year, John 'where's the bar?' Minson visited the First British PBM Convention in the Socialist Republic of Islington to learn all about the extraordinary world of Play By Mail gaming.

Mike McGarry has just dropped me a line to inform us all of the Second British PBM Convention, to be held at the Porchester Hall, London WE2 (near Paddington Station) on Saturday February 7, 1987. All of the major, and most of the minor, PBM companies will be there to chat with their punters, and other features will include demonstration games, contact boards and — yes, John — a bar.

The last convention was a great day out for PBMers young and old and I am certain that this will be just as enjoyable — I hope to see you there!

For further details, send an SAE to: **Mike McGarry, 2 David Court, 200 Lansdowne Road, London N17 9XC.**

DIPLOMATICALLY SPEAKING

The multiplayer nature of PBM games makes interplayer contact — termed 'diplomacy' — an inevitable and crucial feature of the hobby. Diplomacy is not an easy activity to describe, but basically, it's the process of communicating with players in the *real* world to further one's progress in the game. This is done by post or telephone, subjects discussed being alliances, advanced strategies and so on.

Diplomacy is essential to the hobby because it is the means by which games develop their characteristics, as players communicate with each other — declaring war, making trade deals and thus building up diplomatic relations within the game environment.

There is quite a skill to diplomatic communications, and different players adopt individual approaches to gleaning information and doublecrossing allies (my personal approach has sometimes caused true allies to badge me as a 'devious boogger'). Some people, myself included, get so involved with the diplomacy surrounding a game that they spend more time and money on it than they do on the game. To me, this is the true beauty of PBM games; after all, when did your Spectrum last send you an intelligent letter?

GETTING INVOLVED

This is all very well, but how do you get involved in diplomacy? And how should you go about it? On the whole, this is for you to discover, building up your own methods by trial and error. There are, however, a few guidelines for the new PBMer to follow, ones with which most experienced players will agree.

When you first meet another player in a game it may be more advisable to befriend him than to immediately start trying out your wonderful 'zap everything' weaponry: an ally in the hand is better than a kick in the mush. If the game in which you play doesn't give you the player's address, then most GMs will pass a letter on to that player if you give them the player's game name, player number (if known), and game number. You have to hope that the player will write back to your address.

The presentation and content of your letters is important. A tidy, sensible and mature letter is more likely to win you a friend than an untidy scrap of paper prattling on about the two of you joining forces and knocking out the strongest player in the game. A threatening letter which contains personal insults — as opposed to insulting the player's game character, which is generally OK — and threats of physical violence is likely to get you thrown out of PBM altogether, so don't do it!

Finally, never abuse addresses and telephone numbers: some players choose to keep their IDs secret, so if anybody does give you details of how to get in touch with them in the real world — don't tell everybody!

TRY IT

To conclude, I can thoroughly recommend getting involved with diplomacy; there's a lot to it and a bit of espionage can be quite exhilarating! The more you do it, the better you get (hmmm, a lesson for life, that) and once a game is full of complex diplomatic arrangements, agreements and arguments, you will soon see the difference between these and normal computer games.

DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY

To further the cause of peace and understanding amongst the peoples of the PBM gaming world, CRASH wishes to undertake the task of publishing a DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY in the hope of encouraging diplomatic relations between competing gamers. To become a CRASH DIPLOMAT, simply post your name, address, and details of the games in which you play to: **DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY, PBM MAILBOX, 1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.** I will then enter your details into the DIPLOMATIC DIRECTORY for all to read . . .

Valid only if redeemed against an Arcadia startup pack from JADE GAMES before 31st December 1986. Only one voucher per person and photocopies of this coupon are not valid! Okay? Fine. Legal Minion.

£1.50 OFF!



Three Weeks In Paradise completed (100%)
Fantastic Voyage completed (100%)
Kokotoni Wilf completed
Monty on the Run completed (5,850)
Zorro completed (2 hours after I bought it)
Bruce Lee completed
Dynamite Dan completed
Mikie completed
Rockman completed
Saboteur completed
Caves of Doom completed
Mafia Contract completed
Starquake completed (64% 253,535)
Knight Tyme completed
Batman completed
Booty 96 items collected
Chuckie Egg level 23
Raid over Moscow 58,000 approx
Rocky Horror Show 1 piece needed
Spyhunter 125,000 approx
Yie Ar Kung Fu Grandmaster
Bombjack 550,000
Grand National won
Wizards Lair 3 pieces of Golden Lion
Frankie 98%
Julian Fernandez, 39 Cheshire Close, Pollards Hill, Mitcham, Surrey

Daley Thompson's Decathlon: 100m 10.34 secs; Long Jump 11.01m; Shot Putt 25.75; High Jump 2.47m; 110m Hurdles 9.645; Pole Vault 5.10m; Discus 75.90m; Javelin 120.79m.
Hyper Sports: Swimming 26.265; Shooting 9100; Vaulting 9.99; Archery 4520; Triple jump 17.50; Weightlifting: Bantam Weight.
Finders Keepers completed (with over £1000)
Football Manager 1st division, won cup 3 times in a row
Kong completed
Sabre Wulf completed
Mugsy 55%
Supertest: Shooting 5100; Cycling 34.20; Diving 92; Slalom 55; Rowing 26s; Penalties 4,200; Ski jump 82.20.
Starstrike II completed Alpha and Beta
Cookie Baked Cake
James Newbury, St Albans, Herts

Jack the Nipper completed
Alien 8 6 chambers
Spy Hunter 135,000
Beach Head 2 completed
Con-quest 50%
Ghostbusters 128,900
Back to Skool Freed Bike
Starstrike completed 9 times
Psst grown flower 10 times
Frankie solved murder and ZTT quiz
Helichopper Screen 7
Green Beret Harbour Section
Night Gunner Mission 7
Jet-Pac round 4 times
Airwolf 1 scientist
Rebel Star beaten computer
Movie got girl, Money, Gun
Star Firebirds level 8 25,030
Booty 5 objects left
Yie Ar Kung Fu completed
V Blown up 2 ships
Critical Mass Last zone
Match Day beaten computer 3-0 in final
Rambo completed
Steven Ellis and James Arundale, Linthorpe, Middlesborough

Tapper Punk Bar
Turbo Esprit 2 drug cars
Airwolf 3 scientists
Matchpoint beat computer on easy
Grand National 1st
Derby Day over 100,000
Kung Fu Master completed
Underwurlde 64%
Rambo completed
Pyjamarama 82%
Nodes of Yesod 58%
Commando Area 8
On the Run 3 flasks
Gunfright 6th bandit
Ninja Master Blue Belt (70,006)
Bruce Lee completed 27 times on trot
Yie Ar Kung Fu completed
Rocky Horror Show completed on 1st ever go
Wizards Lair 59%
Ghostbusters completed
World Cup won 46 times on trot (still unbeaten)
Simon Rawlinson, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria

Rambo completed 115,600
Ping Pong 2,753,700
Dynamite Dan completed
Frank Bruno Peter Perfect
Equinox Level 4
Jungle Trouble completed
Yabba Dabba Doo built house
Green Beret 119,650 Rescued captives
Airwolf 3 scientists
Ninja Master 44,263 Green Belt
Batman 7 bits of Batcraft
Starquake 169,755 37%
Bombjack 289,450
Jet Pac 248,720
3 Weeks in Paradise completed 100%
Gremlins completed
Commando 248,050
Lee Hurren, Chingford, London

Green Beret completed
Bruce Lee completed 6 times
Mikie completed 4 times
Fist 10th Dan, 82000
Bombjack 261370
Dynamite Dan II onto 4th Island, 5270
Jack the Nipper Little Horror
Ghosts 'n' Goblins completed
Way of the Tiger killed by Troll
Ping Pong won 11-6 level 5
Commando area 7, 192,600
Skooldaze completed
Back to Skool completed
Three Weeks in Paradise completed
Yie Ar Kung Fu completed
Saboteur completed
Rambo completed
Fighting Warrior completed
Sweevo's World completed
Tapper 266,320
Spy vs Spy average guy spy
Marsport completed
Movie completed
Andrew Vevers, Alwoodley, Leeds

Jack the Nipper 65%
Green Beret Clock 4 times
Bombjack 1,042,230 (with pokes)
West Bank Clock 3 times
Ghosts 'n' Goblins Area 3, 608300
Mikie Clock 6 times, 833700
Commando Area 15, 852300
Roller Coaster 21500
Back to School Got frog
Sam Fox Strip Poker all pictures
Zaxxon 31850
Saboteur £36,100, level 1 completed
Ninja Master Yellow Belt
Gordon Rettie, Johnstone, Scotland

Green Beret completed
Commando zone 16
Bombjack 467,100
Robin of the Wood completed
Fairlight completed
Turbo Esprit stopped all Drug Cars in right order
Yie ar Kung Fu beaten Grandmaster 2 times
Starquake completed
Mikie kissed girl 2 times
Sam Fox seen all pictures
Splitting Images six pictures
Death Wake nearly completed
Roller Coaster completed with poke
Hijack 1 medal
Bobby Bearing 3 bearings home
Dynamite Dan II 4 island
Bruce Lee completed
Saboteur completed
Kasper H Kragelund, 8000 Aarhus C Denmark

Chuckie Egg 416,670
Graham Alston, Dorchester

Kane completed twice 16,337 points
Turbo Esprit completed
Rambo completed
Ninja Master completed
Mikie completed twice
Commando Area 4
W S Baseball 4-1 to me
Ant Attack 3 rescued
Yie Ar Kung Fu completed
Highway Encounter Zone 1
Bombjack completed twice
D Rogers, Hounslow, London

Jack the Nipper completed
Rambo completed
Jet Set Willy 1 and 2 completed
Cauldron II 33,000
Cyberun 20,500
Jetman 11,570 Found Trailer
Starstrike 22nd level
Bombjack 120,360
Scrabble Beat all levels
Hunchback completed
Frankie 99,980 pleasure points, BANG!
Chuckie Egg level 43 on a BBC (whoops!)
Finders Keepers completed
Zaxxon 27,000 on Squadron Leader
Charlie Parker, Eastbourne, East Sussex


THANATOS
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TOP THIRTY FOR NOVEMBER

No big climbs or jumps up the charts this month, just a little reshuffling and a sproingette into the Top 20. The top of the chart sees Elite's COMMANDO deserting the front line to make room for this month's numero uno, GHOSTS AND GOBLINS, also from Elite. Out with the old and in with the new means that CYBERUN takes the 14th slot for Ultimate — this month's highest entry — while at 22, STAINLESS STEEL shows a head above the rest for Mikro-Gen and Dave Perry, their v-e-r-y tall programmer. DYNAMITE DAN II also shakes a leg at 16th position for Mirrorsoft, and Firebird's REBEL STAR RAIDERS acts as the new entries' rearguard at number 24.

Muswell Hill is the place to visit if you're a mate of Darren Sayer. He's won this month's £40 worth of software goodies in the Hotline Draw — pulled from the black hole of Hannah Smith's girlie handbag as Graeme's executive 'doc's' are patent leather now and can't be used for menial tasks. I don't think Darren will mind, and neither should the four runners up who all receive their very own CRASH T Shirts and hats. They are: Stephen Grimshaw from Bury; Toby Blake from Inverness; Ted Webb who lives in Waterlooville; and David Wheller from Kenilworth, just across from the Bear and Ragged Staff.

The HOTLINE AND ADVENTURE CHART compiled from the votes of CRASH readers is the most realistic chart for gauging the popularity of Spectrum games — it is the games that are being played that get the votes, not the games that are in the shops this week or month.

And the votes are important. It's up to you to let us know what you feel, so fill in the voting forms that live on the Results pages and make your voice heard. Well, make your writing readable — there's no longer a phoneline voting service.

If you don't want to carve up your copy of CRASH, we understand. Use a photocopy if you like, or copy out the details from the voting forms onto a nice clean sheet of paper and send that to us instead.

Apart from the satisfaction of registering your opinion, there's always the chance of winning a rather interesting prize. Once the information has been taken from the forms we receive during the course of the month, ten voting slips are drawn out for special consideration by Auntie Aggie — five from the Adventure Ballot Box and five from the Hotline Ballot Box.

A top prize of £40 worth of software (your choice, not ours) and a CRASH T Shirt is awarded to the first slip out of the draw from the Hotline votes, and another £40 worth of goodies and a Shirt goes to the Hotline Draw winner.

Four runners up from each ballot collect a CRASH T Shirt and a CRASH Hat, so get those votes in to the CRASH HOTLINE and CRASH ADVENTURE TRAIL, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

Hotline Top 30

1 *(2)*	**GHOSTS AND GOBLINS**	ELITE
2 *(4)*	**QUAZATRON**	HEWSON
3 *(7)*	**JACK THE NIPPER**	GREMLIN GRAPHICS
4 *(1)*	**COMMANDO**	ELITE
5 *(3)*	**BOMBJACK**	ELITE
6 *(6)*	**BATMAN**	OCEAN
7 *(5)*	**ELITE**	FIREBIRD
8 *(9)*	**MATCHDAY**	OCEAN
9 *(8)*	**GREEN BERET**	IMAGINE
10 *(12)*	**BOBBY BEARING**	THE EDGE
11 *(14)*	**KNIGHT TYME**	MASTERTRONIC
12 *(17)*	**MOVIE**	IMAGINE
13 *(15)*	**SPELLBOUND**	MASTERTRONIC
14 *(–)*	**CYBERUN**	ULTIMATE
15 *(22)*	**STARSTRIKE II**	REALTIME SOFTWARE
16 *(–)*	**DYNAMITE DAN II**	MIRRORSOFT
17 *(16)*	**PING PONG**	IMAGINE
18 *(13)*	**HEAVY ON THE MAGICK**	GARGOYLE GAMES
19 *(23)*	**HYPERSPORTS**	IMAGINE
20 *(10)*	**SPINDIZZY**	ELECTRIC DREAMS
21 *(28)*	**BOUNDER**	GREMLIN GRAPHICS
22 *(–)*	**STAINLESS STEEL**	MIKRO-GEN
23 *(11)*	**TURBO ESPRIT**	DURELL
24 *(–)*	**REBEL STAR RAIDERS**	FIREBIRD
25 *(24)*	**BACK TO SKOOL**	MICROSPHERE
26 *(18)*	**EXPLODING FIST**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
27 *(25)*	**STARQUAKE**	BUBBLE BUS
28 *(27)*	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT**	BEYOND
29 *(19)*	**WAY OF THE TIGER**	GREMLIN GRAPHICS
30 *(21)*	**PENTAGRAM**	ULTIMATE

Adventure Top 30

The team down at Gargoyle should be rubbing their hands with glee this month as HEAVY ON THE MAGICK stays king of the castle for the fourth

SHIRE, SY8 1DB.

the crash CHARTS

The team down at Gargoyle should be rubbing their hands with glee this month as HEAVY ON THE MAGICK stays king of the castle for the fourth month running, after arriving at the number 12 slot in June. Perhaps KNIGHT TYME from Mastertronic is a contender for the throne after jumping six places to take second place. Or could it be THE BOGGIT from CRL, which jumps 12 places to take over the vacant slot at number eight? Biggest climber is ROBIN O' THE WOOD returning to the charts to take the 14th slot. Who knows what will happen? It's all up to you and your votes, so don't forget to send in your coupons for next month's chart.

Prizes across the water time — this month a Dutch person wins the £40 goodie bag. So well done to Harem Hanemaayer of Raamsdonksveer in Holland. The four runners up live slightly nearer home and, as winter draws in, should be putting their CRASH hats and T Shirts to good use. They are: Christian Counsell of Southampton; Paul Welford who hails from Gwent; Stuart McBurnie who is from Scotland; and lastly, a regular contributor who finally gets his reward, Jon Sendel from Sheffield.

Adventure Top 30

1 *(1)*	**HEAVY ON THE MAGICK**	GARGOYLE GAMES
2 *(8)*	**KNIGHT TYME**	MASTERTRONIC
3 *(3)*	**SPELLBOUND**	MASTERTRONIC
4 *(6)*	**LORDS OF MIDNIGHT**	BEYOND
5 *(2)*	**LORD OF THE RINGS**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
6 *(4)*	**THE HOBBIT**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
7 *(11)*	**FOURTH PROTOCOL**	CENTURY/HUTCHINSON
8 *(20)*	**THE BOGGIT**	CRL
9 *(5)*	**DOOMDARK'S REVENGE**	BEYOND
10 *(–)*	**WORM IN PARADISE**	LEVEL 9
11 *(10)*	**PRICE OF MAGIK**	LEVEL 9
12 *(9)*	**FAIRLIGHT**	THE EDGE
13 *(21)*	**SEABASE DELTA**	FIREBIRD
14 *(–)*	**ROBIN O' THE WOOD**	ODIN
15 *(14)*	**BORED OF THE RINGS**	SILVERSOFT
16 *(18)*	**DUN DARACH**	GARGOYLE GAMES
17 *(7)*	**SHADOWFIRE**	BEYOND
18 *(13)*	**SWORDS AND SORCERY**	PSS
19 *(–)*	**FRANKIE**	OCEAN
20 *(17)*	**RED MOON**	LEVEL 9
21 *(12)*	**MARSPORT**	GARGOYLE GAMES
22 *(27)*	**SHERLOCK**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
23 *(16)*	**GREMLINS**	ADVENTURE INTERNATIONAL
24 *(26)*	**TIR NA NOG**	GARGOYLE GAMES
25 *(15)*	**REDHAWK**	MELBOURNE HOUSE
26 *(29)*	**EMERALD ISLE**	LEVEL 9
27 *(24)*	**DRAGONTORC**	HEWSON
28 *(–)*	**MASTER OF MAGIC**	MASTERTRONIC
29 *(–)*	**AVALON**	HEWSON
30 *(–)*	**HAMPSTEAD**	MELBOURNE HOUSE







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ULTIMATE PLAY THE GAME
PRESENTS
JETMAN
JOHN RICHARDSON
HO! (HUM) JETMAN, WHO HAS WON A WHOLE PLANET IN A CONKER GAME, HAS JUST BEEN SHOT AT BY SNIPERS AN' TRIED TO GET INTO PARROTMANS BULLET-PROOF SUIT, BUT THE WILY PAROTMAN WAS IN IT AT THE TIME AN' HAS TAKEN JETMAN PRISONER ON BEHALF OF THE REBEL SNIPERS
HOWD'YA LIKE THEM APPLES, STANLEY?
BY DABE ID DOT ZTADLEY! BY DABE ID JEDMAD!
WELL, WHATEVER YO NAME IS, BOY, I HAS YOU, AN' I GOIN TAKE YO CROWN AN' RULE.... YAS?
WHY DOT?
DOE!
COZ I ABDICATE!
PEDNG
ABDI WHO?
ABDICATE!
BUMPH
PCHTWEE
ZOW
ZING
ACH!
OKAY, KATE!
HOL' FIRE GUYS WE DON'T WANNA HURT A LADY, DO WE?
EVEN ONE AS UGLY AS KATE HERE!
KATE, YOU'RE A VERY SILLY GIRL...
YOU COULD'VE BEEN HURT... GIMME BACK MY SHOOTER... IT'S A GOOD JOB MAH BOYS DON'T FIGHT WITH WIMMIN...
ALLA SAME... YOU BETTER BE CAREFUL...
THOK
... SOME OF MY BOYS HAVEN'T SEEN A WOMAN IN YEARS!
DUH...
WHADDA PRIDDY FACE...
HYUK
STAY COOL, LADY AN' I'LL TRY TO GET YO OUTA THIS IN ONE PIECE!
YAS!
DUH-HUH-HUH...
THASSA PRIDDIEST FACE I EVER DID SEE!
WHY DON'T YOU JUS' BEAT IT!
SHE SHOULDNA SAID THAT
SLAP
DUH,,, HOKAY!
DRUBBA DRUBBA DRUBBA DRUBBA
SAAAY! DESE EARTH WIMMIN IS FUN...
I TOL' YOU TO BE CAREFUL, DIDN'T I? I TOL' YOU MY BOYS HAVEN'T SEEN A WOMAN IN YEARS, DIDN'T I? YOU KNOW WHAT YOU GOIN' TO HAFTA DO NEXT, DON' YOU?
DARN IT...
YO! SHE DOES A PRETTY MEAN TAP-DANCE, TOO!
TIPPITY-TAP-TAPPIT
YO GOIN HAFTA DARN 20,000 PAIRS OF SOCKS IS WHAT YO GOIN' HAFTA DO, LADY! AN' AFTER THAT YO IS COOKING DINNER, AN' WASHING UP...
HAIEE
CHIRP!
SO THAT'LL BE PRAWN COCKTAILS FO' STARTERS,... CHICKEN AN' CHIPS. AN' PEAS,.. CHOCKY PUD AN' COFFEE FOR 20,000!
FUHAW!
TWO SUGARS IN MINE...
I WISH I HAD THE EYE-OF-OKTUP... I WISH I HAD MY PET MONSTER... I WISH I WAS IN DIXIE... BWAH!
WHY ARE WE WAITIN WHY ARE WE WAI
SUDDENLY,...
WELL... LOOKY HERE...
MY MONSTER!
I'M SAVED!
WOW!
YES I AM!
YAS!
HO!
I THINK I'LL SCRUB ROUND THE PRAWNS AND JUS' HAVE THE CHICKEN & CHIPS... EASY ON THE PEAS!
GAWSH! HAS THE MONSTER CHANGED SIDES?... HE'S CERTAINLY NOT THE SAME AS HE WAS... HE USED TO BE SO HUNGRY...

TECH NICHE



This month Jon Bates gets well into a new music utility from RAM Electronics and FLARE Technology. It seems this little number just about does everything . . . maybe you should get talking to Santa?

THE MUSIC MACHINE

Producer: **RAM/Flare**
Price: **£49.95**

This is one of the best all round music add-ons for the Spectrum that I've seen. With it you get a very decent sound sampler and sequencer that enables you to sample sounds, edit them and then compose tunes with them bar by bar, ordering the bars into a composition using the sequencer option.

Very cleverly it has a set of drum sounds that you can use as a built-in drum machine once the software is loaded. There have been other packages that either give you drums, sampling, some sort of tune composer and MIDI interface but *The Music Machine* takes the best of each option and puts them all together in a well documented package. You don't need to be an expert as it uses a very simplified music notation that encourages you to experiment with sounds to create whatever you want.

The option of MIDI interface means that RAM's hardware can become part of a complete home music system using synths and other music devices. As you may have realised, it does not use a sound chip for its sound. Rather, it comes with pre-recorded samples which can either be either altered or replaced with your own. The package arrives with a dinky microphone, but you can get away with putting any sound source directly in so long as you are careful. All tunes, rhythms and samples can be saved on to either cassette or Microdrive and although the software is cassette based it too can be downloaded to Microdrive. Having loaded up, the main menu gives you a whole pile of option pages — I'll run through these to give you some idea of what the equipment can do.

PLAY All pages have this option and *The Music System* will either play your sample, drum sound, composed bar or complete tune depending on the page displayed. On the main menu page this option performs the factory-set demonstration tune.

PIANO This converts some of the top two rows of qwerty keys into a one octave keyboard on which you can play any selected or created sample direct from your micro — sounds really funny with drums! The name of the current sample played is displayed. The display does away with the need for an overlay as it illustrates the keyboard on screen. It might have been useful to have more than one octave available here, as most tunes use a wider range. Unfortunately this page is only monophonic (one note at a time).

SAMPLER Here life starts to get interesting. The sampler has two methods of recording a sound. Like most tape recorders it has either an automatic record level or a manual record level, set with a slider on the hardware. There is a bar graph on-screen that changes colour as the input level increases. In automatic mode recording only happens above a preset threshold. With the manual option any level can be recorded, but only if the trigger key is depressed. There are some limitations to the amount of sound you can record — this is also in direct relationship to the pitch of the note. The general guide (without getting too technical) is that the highest note you can record is half the sampling rate. For our techno buffs this means that the highest note it will accept is 9.5kHz, which is well above the top notes of the piano, although a little limiting on the upper harmonics.

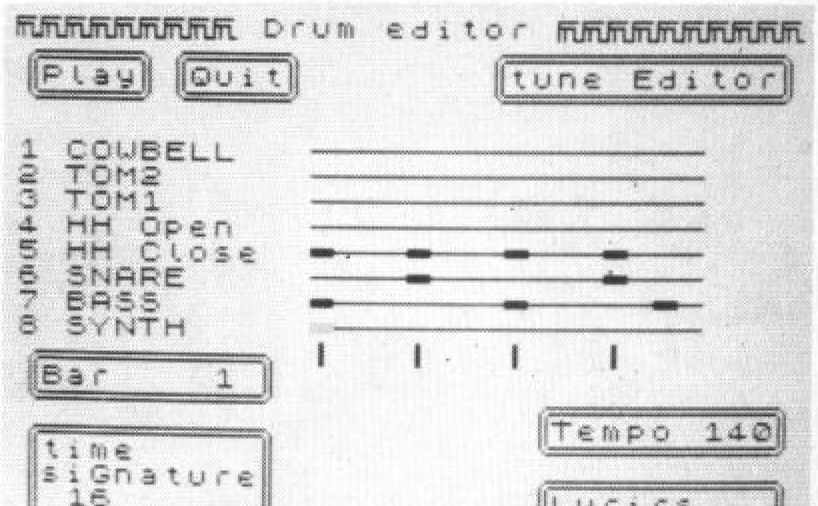
However, the total time capacity at present is only one second. So each of the eight samples had better be pretty damn short. Not to worry. As you will see the Music Machine has some very useful features to help you around some of these problems. Having captured your sample you will more than likely find that it has gaps at the beginning and end, or that it simply is not percussive enough (headbangers anonymous will love this!). Back via the main menu we find the . . .

SAMPLE EDITOR This lets you see a graphic representation of your sample on screen. By judicious use of the editing facilities you can chop the blank bits of the start and finish off your sample. If the sound is not percussive enough (that is, it has a slow rise time) then you can chop the beginning of the sample to suit. For finite editing the page has a 'zoom' facility that enables you to enlarge the graph for the start and end of your sound and make the edit absolutely spot on.

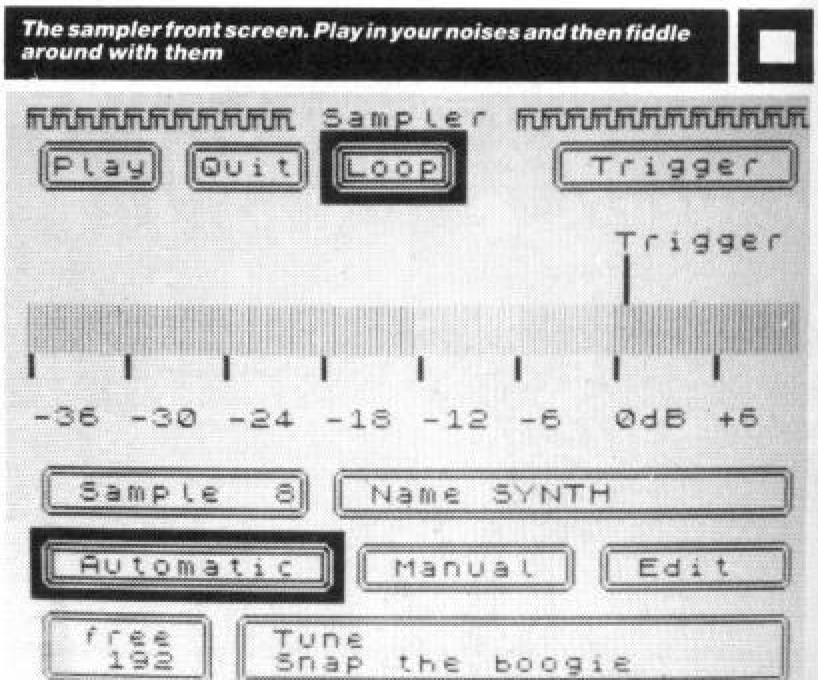
Lovers of the bizarre will rejoice in the knowledge that the sample can also be reversed for weird effects. For continuous sounds like strings there is a loop facility which endlessly repeats the sound as long as you hold on to the key. All in all a pretty good effort at home sampling without the tears and frustration of a mega-overdraft.

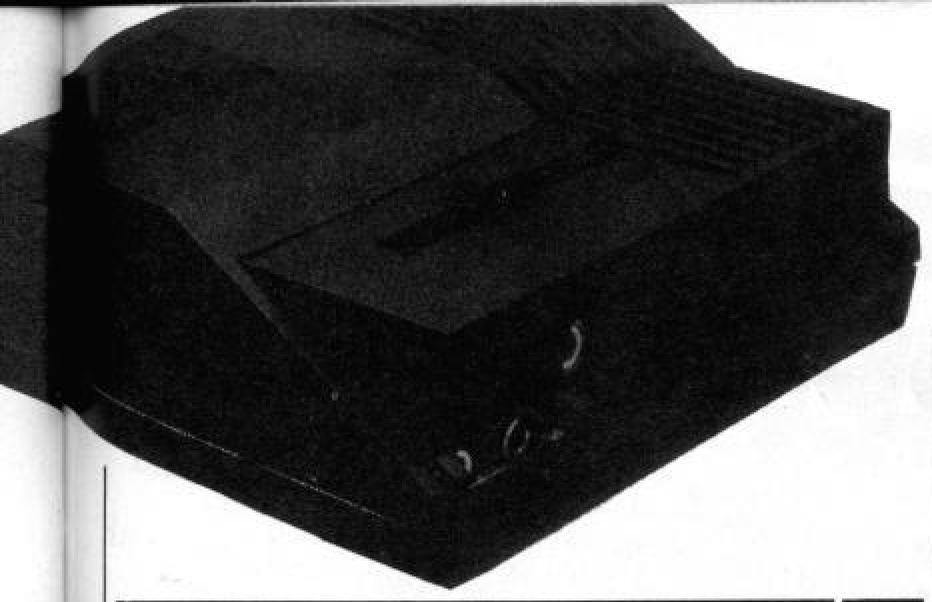
ECHO Obviously, with a sampler the possibilities for echo and delay are abundant. You can delay your voice for up to one and a half seconds by selecting this option, noting the delay time on screen. It would be more effective if you plugged the microphone via a mixer that gave you separate outputs (or an effects send and return). This would allow you to mix the treated and untreated signal to give variable 'double-tracking' effects to whatever sound you have input. Real laughs start when

The drum editor. Now it's time to create rhythm patterns to accompany your music, using the drumsounds supplied or sounds you've sampled specially for the purpose

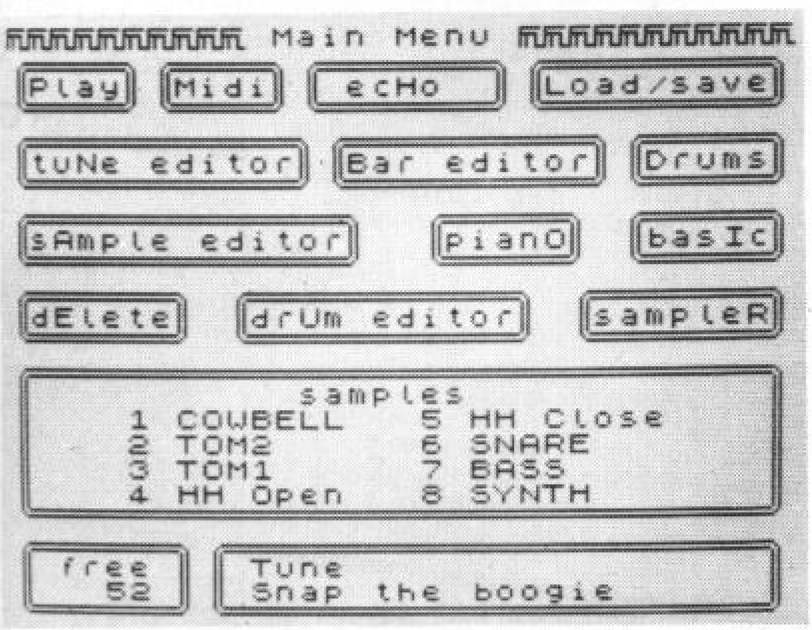


The sampler front screen. Play in your noises and then fiddle around with them





The hardware heart of the Music Machine. Slot it onto the back of your Spectrum and a whole world of music is opened up . . .



The main menu screen — here's where all the music-making starts

you put headphones on and try to hold a conversation with yourself through *The Music Machine* with it adding about a one second delay to the sound that reaches your ears.

BAR EDITOR AND DRUM EDITOR The prime difference between these compositional tools is that the drum editor lets you play all the samples and the bar editor accesses selected samples. The bar editor only allows two notes simultaneously (duophonic no less!), although these can be different voices. These options function much like other tune composers we have seen in the past in that you can compose a bar, mess around and gradually perfect it. Once you're happy with a bar, move on to the next one. . . .

The notation used is not standard, although it uses conventional staves — the time signature is unreasonably inflexible at present: anything with three beats to the bar can upset it a little. However this is being corrected as this issue is being printed. Each bar composed can be given a name — for instance 'intro', 'verse' or whatever expletive comes to mind. The drum editor works very much on the same basis except that each drum sound is given a line on screen.

TUNE EDITOR This assembles the bar patterns created in either drum or bar mode. You have to list each appearance of the bar, so 256 repeats of bar One could be a bit of a pain to enter. One big minus here is that owing to the limitations of the computer *The Music Machine* will not run a tune and drum pattern together. Shame. This means that it's either down to the good old tape recorder or using the MIDI options to play the synth voices while the drum machine ploughs relentlessly on.

MIDI Either you play the samples internally from the qwerty or externally from your MIDI keyboard. Presto, an instant sampler. Or you could use *The Music Machine* as a drum machine. Or you could get it top play the tune in the sequencer in time with the drums in your keyboard. In other words it will send and respond to note on/off commands, pitch values, and the MIDI timing clock pulses on any or all sixteen channels.

Future developments for the package look good with a 128k version of the software out soon with increased sample time. Later on there will be software that converts the package to either a dedicated drum machine, MIDI realtime recorder or music sequencer.

Clearly, *The Music Machine* is going to be the basis of several specialised music utilities. In general the whole package represents excellent value for money and I would suggest that as Santa is thinking of whipping his reindeer into action soon, it might be an idea to get him to do you the courtesy of dropping a *Music Machine* down whatever passes for your chimney.

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Spectrum 48k, Commodore 64, Amstrad CPC

Phasor One



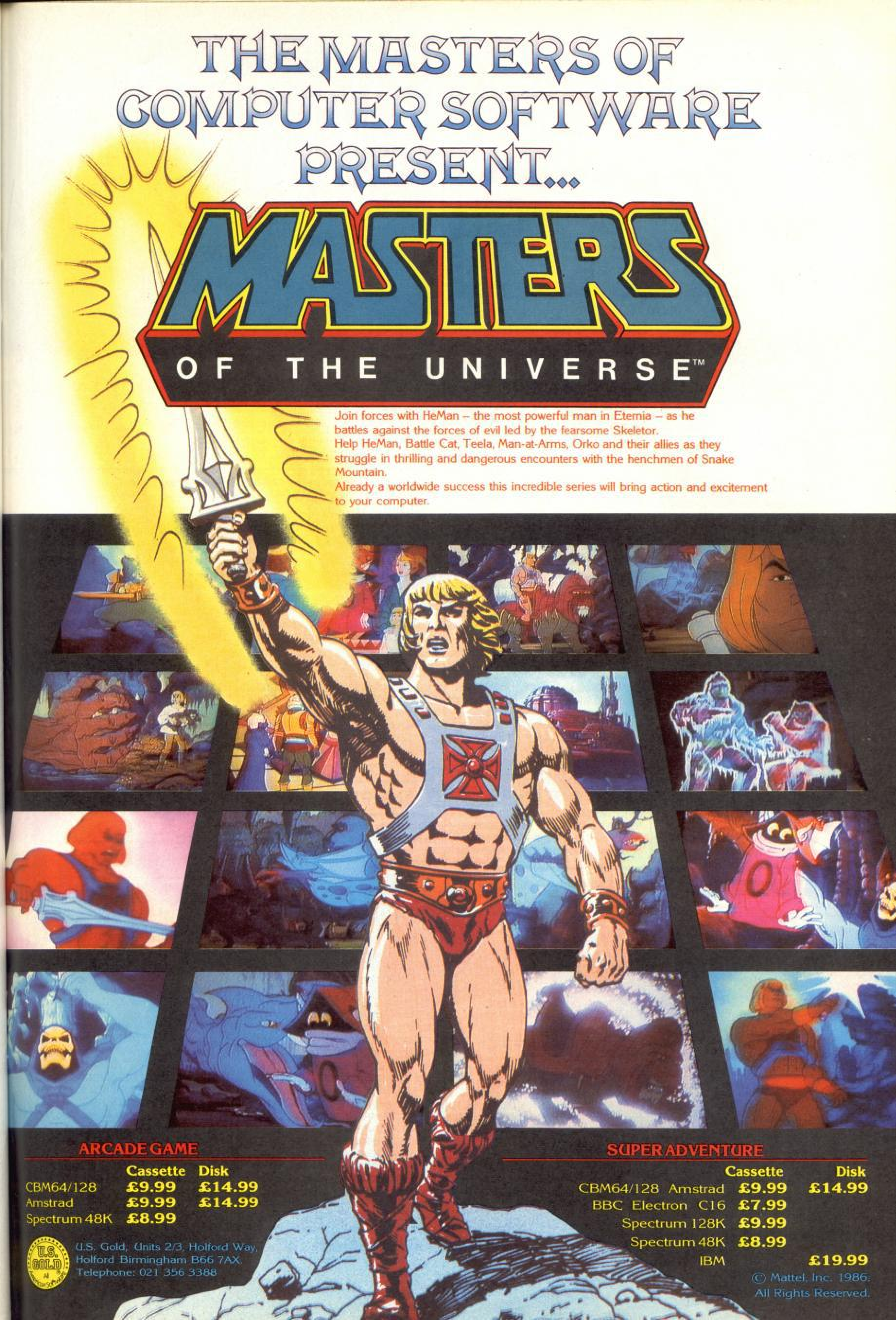
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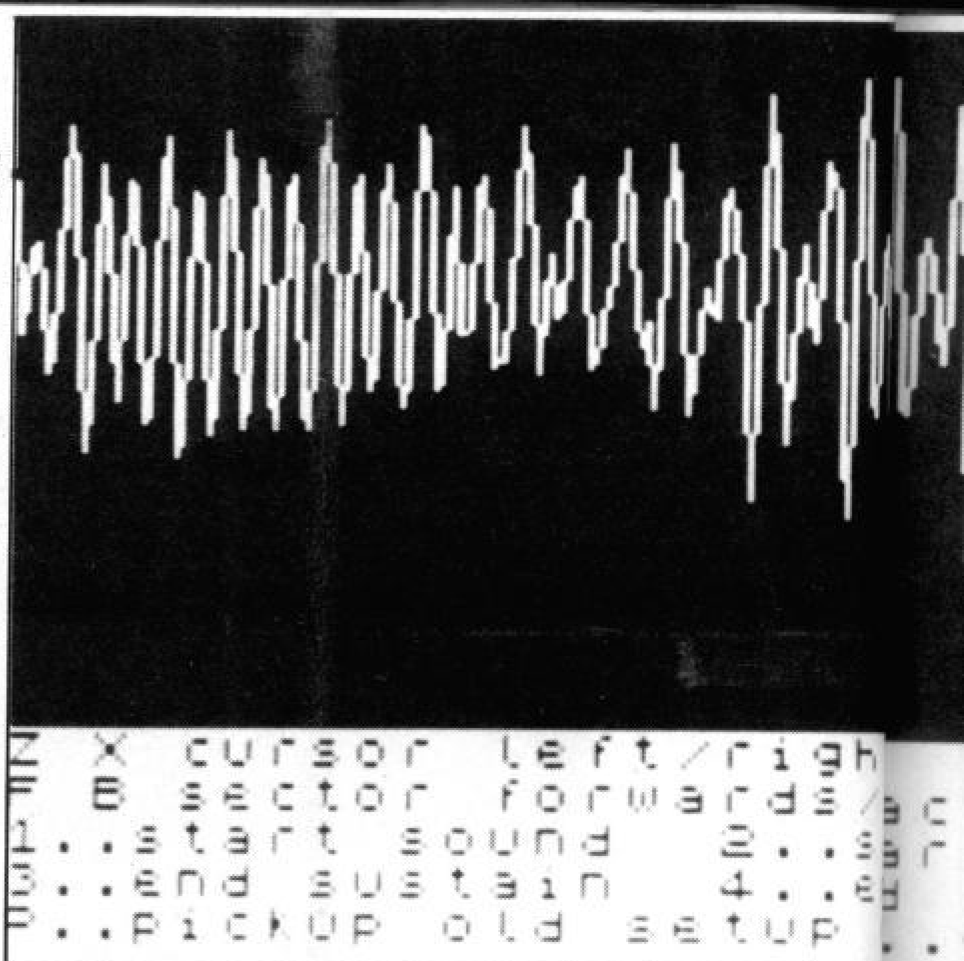
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TECH TIPS



Simon Goodwin samples the CH . . . CH . . . CHEETAH Sound Sampler, dispenses more hints for users of the Spectrum 128 and the new Plus Two, Drums On and continues finding ways to disable the BREAK key



Configuring a sound in the CHEETAH Sampler's edit section. . . . This is what "OY CAM" sounds like!

SAMPLING SOUNDS THE CHEETAH WAY

At last I have obtained a copy of CHEETAH's new *Sound Sampler*. This is a music add-on for the Spectrum; like its predecessor, the *SpecDrum*, the new gadget promises to be great fun for non-musicians as well as budding pop stars.

Sound sampling is a simple idea. Like a cine camera taking pictures very quickly, a sound sampler tests the volume of a sound literally tens of thousands of times a second, and stores the result as a stream of numbers in computer memory. The numbers can later be 'played back' through an interface and loudspeaker, reproducing the original sound.

The faster you can read numbers, and the more accurately you can measure volume, the better the sound quality. Good compact disc players can recognise 65,536 volume levels about 40,000 times a second; if it wasn't for the limitations of the recording equipment — ultimately, the microphones and pickups — this would sound just like the real thing.

CHEETAH's sampler can discern 256 levels 35,000 times a second, so the sound quality is a little rough and distorted, but has quite a wide tonal range. The first pre-production unit I tested crackled badly, but CHEETAH have convinced me that this was a random fault on that hand-built prototype — the second unit worked fine. A similar sampler, made-to-measure for musicians on a budget, would cost about £200 and you couldn't play games on it!

A sound sampler can do many things that a tape cannot, as anyone who has heard **Paul Hardcastle**'s *NuNuNuNineteen* hit will realise. In fact that record only contains a tiny fraction of the repetoire of a good sampler. And it's easy. And it's fun, for anyone remotely interested in music.

The box with two twiddly knobs, known to its f..f..f..friends as the CHEETAH Sound Sampler



THE PROSPECT

Almost everyone has musical ideas. Whether you hum, clap or tap biros on a desk you probably make your own music from time to time. But, until quite recently, you couldn't produce 'real' music that way. It took years of practice and training to be able to get 'musical' results out of the clumsy, tangled machines we call musical instuments. It was boring, especially if you were forced to play other people's music while learning. Few people started to learn; most of them gave up. The world is full of people with musical ideas who can't express them. Yet.

There is a new revolution, happening in music. For the first time ordinary people are discovering that they can make music acceptable to themselves — and to many others — without having to master the techniques of music or of playing an instrument.

Once a sound has been stored in a computer it can be modified in a virtually infinite number of ways; all you need is appropriate software. Of course, older technology lets you alter sounds too, but the computer allows changes to be recorded, replayed, tweaked, and tested in a totally reliable, repeatable way.

Like other HiTech revolutions before it, the computer revolution in music will not create anything new, but it will give everyone access to an ability that previously was only available to a trained few.

The CHEETAH *Sound Sampler* is an important step towards this new musical world. It's not a revolution in itself, but it is a sign of the times, which is why I have spent a few paragraphs explaining what is going on. This review will be from the point of view of a non-musician. Professional Muso **Jon Bates** will add his comments next month.

THE PRODUCT

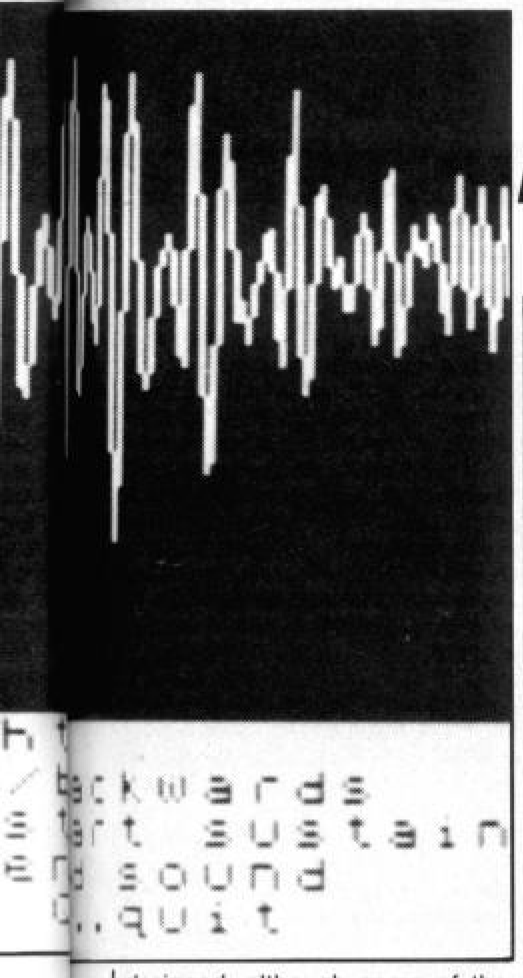
£44.95 gets you a cardboard box containing a microphone, interface unit, tape and manual.

The microphone appears to have come from a cheap cassette recorder — there's even a tape-stop switch, although the sampler makes no use of this. The quality of the microphone is adequate, but if you've got a better one, use it.

The interface plugs into the edge connector at the back of your computer. There's no through port, so you can't plug anything into the back of the sampler. Two control knobs point back towards the Spectrum; you'll need some kind of bus extender if you want to use this interface with a deep add-on keyboard such as a FULLER *FDS*.

There's a 3.5mm input socket on one side of the box and a trailing output lead, ending in a phono plug, on the other side. This plugs into your amplifier or HiFi, so that you can hear what you're doing.

The electronics look well



designed, although some of the soldering was a bit dodgy on the prototypes I examined. CHEETAH have used standard Ferranti chips, with a metal 'ground plane' on the board to reduce interference from the computer. Port 127 is used for input and output. You must access port 191 — the strobe — at least seven microseconds before you read a sample, to trigger the analogue to digital converter.

The tape is the most important part of the package — software determines the power of any computer-controlled musical device. One side of the tape holds two programs — the *Sampler* and the *Sound Utilities*. On the other side you find *Samples* — data recordings of the sound of an organ, glass breaking, bells, a handclap, and speech. There are no back-up recordings on the tape, but fortunately the files are easily copied; they're useless without the interface, of course.

The manual is a twelve-page cassette-sized booklet. The blue type is very small, but readable. The text is interesting to read, but a little chaotic in organisation. There are a few Hints and Tips, but not enough. For more, read on!

SAMPLER

The sampler loads froms cassette in 2 minutes 40 seconds. After the first part loads you must stop the tape and indicate whether or not you want to transfer everything to Microdrive. This gets irritating if you've only got tapes, although it is good to see that CHEETAH are supporting the Microdrive. The program also allows you to use the 128's extra memory to store samples — hooray!

Your first step should be to set the input level. I tested the sampler successfully with microphones, a guitar, synth, cassette and compact disk. In each case you connect the device to the small socket on the left of the sampler, select the 'Set Level' option, and play some music or make a noise. The graph of the sound appears on the screen. The display is re-drawn every second, and looks quite pretty.

You must adjust the input level — the left hand knob — until the graph fills most of the display without running into the top or bottom edge. That indicates an overload, which would cause a distorted recording.

Once you've set the level you can use the sample menu. A standard Spectrum can record about a second of good quality sound — or two seconds at 'half speed', which gives a duller tone. Spectrum 128 owners can record for up to six seconds — sampling uses up RAM at a prodigious rate.

Memory is divided into small units and you can split these between named samples as you wish. It's a good idea to keep the sample names short, as the software asks you for them rather persistently. Beware: the program does not complain if you use the same name for more than one sample.

Once you've decided the length and speed of a sample you can start recording under manual or automatic control. Manual recordings begin when you press a key; automatic ones start as soon as the input signal reaches a fairly high level. Immediately after recording you can hear what's stored by using the 'List Samples' option, which displays the name and length of stored sounds, playing them back as they are listed.

CONFIGURATION

To get full control you must use the 'Edit' sub-menu. This lets you combine, copy, reverse, or delete samples by name. Most importantly, you can 'configure' a sound. This is a powerful but rather fiddly process. The idea is to put down four markers, which between them allow you to stretch sounds and get distinctive "NuNuNuNineteen" effects.

As you configure a sound, each unit of the recording is displayed as a graph on the screen. You can move to any point in the sound and position markers on the graph at that point

The graph corresponds directly to the sound, so you can spot the key points by eye with a little practice. It takes a while to learn to do ▶

this, but the final version of the software allows you to replay the sound up to and from the current point, which makes it easy to find your way around by ear.

The four markers must be arranged in order. The first one indicates the point where you want replay to begin. The sound is replayed from there, past the second marker, and up to the third. If the control key is still held down, the sound between the second and third markers is repeated. Otherwise the rest of the sound — up to the last marker — is replayed, then the computer stops till you press another key.

For example, you might sample the word "CHEETAH", putting the first and last markers at either end of the word. If you put the second and third markers around the 'hee' part of the word, a long stab at the key would give the sound: "Chee-hee-hee-tah". If you put those markers nearer the end of the word, you might get "Cheeta-ta-tah".

There was no way to free the unused space at either end of a marked sound on the software I tested. The final version should allow this.

Of course, you're not stuck with speech. You can record screams, crashes, bleeps, creaks, or any other sound. If you can't afford a synthesiser you can borrow one and sample it, saving the result on tape or Microdrive for future use. CHEETAH supply a few pre-recorded samples, but it's easy to record your own — I lost no time in blasting my neighbours with sampled drum sounds from **Cameo**'s recent hit *The word UP!*

The playback option is controlled by twelve keys, each corresponding to a different note in a piano-key arrangement. In conjunction with SHIFT you can replay a sample at any one of 24 different pitches, higher or lower than the original. **The Art of Noise** like to do this sort of thing.

Unfortunately the speed of playback changes with the pitch, so it is hard to use musical samples containing more than one beat. Pure notes from other instruments usually sound okay, as you can fill them out by repeating a section.

The save and load options seemed to work fine; they allowed you to delete and catalogue Microdrive files, but there was no option to format a new cartridge.

The sampler may seem hard to use, and indeed the menu structure is a bit irritating at times, but it's not long before you can find your way around. From then on it's f . . . f . . . f . . . fabulous, whether you're just playing around or trying to get a specific effect.

SOUND UTILITIES

The *Sound Sampler* contains electronics to read sounds and replay them — and it can do both at the same time, delaying or adjusting the levels to produce an incredible range of effects. The Sound Utilities are provided by a small machine-code program recorded after the *Sampler*. Tape loading time is about one minute.

The Utilities can process sounds in lots of different ways, and sometimes the names of the options don't really match up with the effect. Rather than try to analyse what the program is doing, I've chosen to describe the sound. Readers who are not familiar with BBC Science Fiction may find some of the analogies a bit puzzling!

There's no level meter in this package, so you must set the input level — the left hand knob — by listening for distortion. All of the effects produce results which you can hear at once, so this is not much of a problem.

The main menu lists six options — an Echo Chamber, Reverb Unit, Pitch Shifter, Fuzz Box, Sound Chopper and 'Bubbleizer'. Most options have one or two 'slider controls' associated with them. When an option is selected, the appropriate control keys are displayed until another key is pressed — a nice feature. You can't use a mouse or a joystick, unfortunately.

The Echo Chamber produces a good artificial echo effect, like a *Kopykat* tape echo machine. It is fun, and good practice for public speaking, to wear headphones and try to talk while a recording of what you said half a second before is played back, full blast. The right hand knob on the interface comes into play here, controlling the extent to which echoes are themselves echoed. Setting this to maximum and using the longest echo you get three or four echoes of each sound, fading over about two seconds, with the last one very quiet and distorted.

The minimum echo setting produces the acoustics of a small toilet with a high ceiling. Prehistoric pop-pickers will remember that the **Korgis** recorded their No.13 hit *If I had yoooooo* in the loo to get just this sound — now it's built into your Spectrum!

The Reverb Unit is meant to produce a more natural echo. In fact it produces a quite unreal effect. At low settings it adds echo and an interesting tuned Jew's Harp sound buzzing in time with your voice. I used the microphone with this effect, and the result sounded a bit like a Vogon **Laurie Anderson** (*Oh SuperVogon*?).

As you increase the setting, the sampler just seems to pick notes randomly from the input — speech remains inflected but is unintelligible once the control is about half way across the scale. At the top setting you just get a pipelike fuzzy wailing tone in time with your voice.

The Pitch Shifter could be dedicated to **Douglas Adams**' *Hitchikers Guide to the Galaxy* since many of the voices from the series are here. The effect is to shift the pitch of the input in a rather unsteady way, up or downwards. At the top of the scale a voice sounds like a Magrathean Mouse. Lower down there are all sorts of voices: 'Toff', 'Brummie', 'TV-Voiceover', 'Marvin the Paranoid Android' and a good (?) 'Vogon'. Use the second control — the 'duty cycle' to search for each of the above as you reduce the pitch. There are lots of other effects I can't describe.

The Fuzz Box is rather trivial. Whatever signal is put in, it limits the output to a fixed maximum level. Loud sounds are distorted — the louder, the more distorted. There's no control — just a 'quit' key. Quit.

The Sound Chopper seems to be the favorite at CHEETAH. Throughout the PCW show, from their position on the balcony, they shouted in imitation Dalek tones as I scuttled around talking to people. The sound chopper produces a very authentic Dalek voice from a human monotone. It works by chopping the sound up and only replaying alternate parts.

Slightly slower settings work well on synthesisers and guitars, especially if you use Stereo or mix in a bit of the un-chopped signal. The slowest settings are pretty useless, and the control moves very slowly — the longest chop time is about two thirds of a second, and the slider only moves a small distance every chop.

The strangely-spelt Bubbleizer is a new effect invented by **Bob Powell** of SPEEDWELL SOFTWARE. Bob designed the *Sound Sampler* for CHEETAH. The Bubbleizer starts out sounding as if a Kazzoo band is playing along with your voice (or whatever else you're recording). Greater settings add a metallic rasp, and a kind of dripping hollow echo, rising in pitch.

After a while the noise becomes abstract, and sounds like a sympathetic Sci-Fi whistling computer; a collection of short, pure tones in time with the input. This gets slower and slower. If you hum, at the maximum setting, the result resembles some kind of alien police siren. The Depth control works painfully slowly here — it takes 40 seconds of 'auto-repeating' to move it across the scale.

UTILITIES SOUND

I suspect that this program was included for musicians. In fact it has so many effects that it will probably produce music for anyone who can hum. Instruments — who needs 'em?

I looked at two prototype versions of this sampler. The first was abnormally noisy and there were a few 'rough edges' in the software, but the problems were irritations rather than major flaws. I'm fairly sure that both hardware and software will be tidied up by the time you read this and CHEETAH are in mass production.

CHEETAH have two more products in the pipeline — a sequencer, which can automatically play tunes made up of sampled sounds, and a mega-clever bi-directional MIDI interface.

DATEL and RAM ELECTRONICS are also addressing this musical market. It's good that they're taking Spectrum users with them!

DRUM EDITOR

I receive several programs to edit CHEETAH*SpecDrum* sounds every month. The lastest, from Christopher Bleakley, **is the best yet; it is available for sale, and should appeal to any keen *SpecDrum*mer who has not already written one.**

Christopher's *Drum Editor* develops the ideas featured in CRASH over the last year. It uses machine-code routines for all the fiddly bits, so it works quickly. You can load up to five drum files, each one of which corresponds to a single drum in the *SpecDrum* kit. You can use CHEETAH's own *Kit Editor* to separate the individual sounds, or a simple splitter program supplied with the *Drum Editor*.

The program mimics the appearance of CHEETAH's own software, with single-key controls for most functions. The main menu allows you to load, save or alter drum files; the alter option takes you to the function menu, which is the core of the program.

DRUM FUNCTIONS

You can change the name of a drum, or the type number that determines where in the kit the drum may appear. The 'View Waveform' option produces a compressed graph of the sound the file will produce. This is drawn very quickly indeed; you can print the graph with a single key-press, as long as your printer can handle the COPY command. Drawings in the documentation show the outline of various types of sound.

You can edit the graph with the 'Draw Onto Waveform' option, which lets you change the sound by moving any part of the wave up or down. You can work from a random pattern or a sine-wave graph. You can even design your own sound, describing it (rather laboriously) with a sequence of numbers.

Files can be copied, reversed, and combined. You can play back the edited sound through the *SpecDrum* hardware, without having to load the drumming program — this is very useful.

The *Drum Editor* is very good as far as it goes, but it is a pity that it will only handle five sounds — you can't load or save a whole kit. The documentation — four pages of densely-typed A4 paper — is competently and clearly written. *SpecDrum* is spelt with a 'K' throughout, to avoid copyright problems, but CHEETAH's **Bob Pierson** has given the go ahead for Christopher to use the normal spelling.

Christopher Bleakley's *Drum Editor* cassette costs £2.99 including postage. His address is **1, KIRKMOYLE VIEW, BALLYMONEY, COUNTY ANTRIM, BT53 6DH.**

128 HINTS

Here are some more hints for users of the Spectrum 128 — Sinclair or Amstrad style. Jon Bates has still got our 128, so I've not been able to try these out, but I have printed all the contributors' names so you know who to blame . . . !

The 128's RENUMBER facility is pretty limited, but **David Clark** has found out how to change the start and step line numbers it uses. The initial line-number is stored at 23444 and 23445, with the step from one line to the next at 23446 and 23447. You can change these by POKEing new values; the second byte of each pair contains the number divided by 256, and the first holds the remainder after division, as usual in Spectrum memory.

David has also worked out how to change the colours of the editing screen, using the paging POKE I printed in June. First you must combine the INK, PAPER, FLASH and BRIGHT values into a single number, as follows:

```
NUMBER = INK+PAPER*8+BRIGHT*64+FLASH*128
```

Then type this command, replacing ED with the combined value for the editing screen, and NE with the colour value you want when you're not editing:

```
CLEAR 49151:POKE 23388,23:POKE 60431,NE:POKE 60433,ED
```

David's last tip lets a program return to the 'main menu' when it has finished. This line does the trick:

```
CLEAR 49151:POKE 23388,23:POKE 60430,1
```

128 NOTES

Last month's explanation of the 128 sound chip told you how to make noises, but didn't explain how to produce musical notes. An anonymous reader has sent in a table of note values for the sound chip. Twelve numbers correspond to each of the notes on an even-tempered scale, giving you reasonably accurate sharps and flats as well as 'white notes'. You can work out the values of notes in subsequent octaves by dividing the appropriate note number by two, and then four, then eight, and so on — ignore any remainder after division.

The tricky bit is splitting each value in two — the 128 uses two registers to control the pitch of each sound generator. This is the sort of job that a computer can do well — the program listed under the table converts a note value (from the table) and an octave number (between 0 and 8) into two values — the settings for the coarse and fine controls respectively. Thus, to play an 'F' in the third octave you would enter 2562 and 2. The program indicates a fine pitch of 128 and a coarse pitch of 2.

My final tips for 128 users concern the function key pad, which I have mentioned twice before. **T D Elcott** has discovered that SYMBOL SHIFT **I** will move the editing cursor down ten lines. EXTEND **N** is also useful, as **Ian Edwards** has found — it recalls a program line after an accidental deletion!

SPECTRUM 128 SOUND CHIP

TABLE OF NOTE VALUES:

Note name	Note value
C	3421
C Sharp	3228
D	3047
D Sharp	2876
E	2715
F	2562
F Sharp	2419
G	2283
G Sharp	2155
A	2034
A Sharp	1920
B	1892

CONVERSION PROGRAM:

```
100 INPUT "Note value, octave: ",note,octave
110 LET note= INT (note/2 ↑ octave)
120 LET coarse= INT (note/256)
130 PRINT "Fine & coarse values: ",note-coarse*
256,coarse
140 STOP
```

A CLEAN BREAK

I'm still getting lots of correspondence about how to disable the Spectrum's BREAK key from within BASIC programs. Several people have mentioned the fact that you can save BASIC as CODE. This has three benefits: you can't break in by loading with MERGE; anti-break POKEs can be saved before the program so that it is protected as the BASIC loads and finally, you can save the loading screen and the program all as one file.

This is **Ben Jones'** advice. Put one or more of the anti-break POKEs featured in past issues into line 9998 of your program. Then add this line:

```
9999 LET STKEND=PEEK 23653+256*PEEK 23654: SAVE "<name> CODE 23552,STKEND-23500: RUN
```

Save an unprotected copy of the program — in case something goes wrong — then GO TO 9998 to save a protected CODE file.

This protection technique is hard to get around, but, like all others, it can be broken by a determined hacker who loads the code to an address above RAMTOP and then moves it down, correcting the protection POKEs. This is tricky if the file occupies all 48K of memory, although a clever hacker can split a file and process it piecemeal; to make things difficult, and save the display, user defined characters and machine-code all in one file, use this line:

```
9999 SAVE "<name>" CODE 16384,49152: RUN
```

The biggest snag of this is that files take a long time to save and load! You can't win, with protection techniques — the cleverer you are the more you annoy legitimate users and the people who duplicate tapes for you. Unfortunately, while most people continue to copy software, expensively-developed software must be protected.

COMING UP

In the December issue I hope to explain how you can use the CHEETAH *Sampler* and *SpecDrum* together; I'll also look at *GENIE*, a disassembler package for ROMANTIC ROBOT's *Multiface 1*.
If you've got an idea, please write to the usual address: TECH TIPS CRASH TOWERS 1-2 KING STREET, LUDLOW.

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ZX SPECTRUM

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Screen shots taken from various computer formats.

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A HEWSON HAT-TRICK

With two recent CRASH Smashes, for *Quazatron* and *Pyracurse*, already under its collective belt, the folks at HEWSON are limbering up to deliver another three body blows to the software charts before Christmas. Hannah Smith and Bill Scolding have been looking at *Firelord*, *Uridium* and *City Slicker*, and they spoke to the brains behind the games . . .

SETTING THE TOWN ON FIRE

Steve Crow, author of the hugely successful *Starquake* and *Wizard's Lair*, is the latest top programmer to join the creative and prolific team at HEWSON. His first game for them is the soon-to-be-released *Firelord*.

Firelord is set in the deceptively quaint medieval land of Torot. Ramshackle half-timbered dwellings line the cobbled streets, and fairy tale woods fringe the town. It's all a bit like Ludlow, really, without the traffic wardens and yellow binbags!

Steve based a lot of the buildings on houses in his home county of Kent, and points out that some of the dwellings have peculiar funnels protruding from the roof slates. 'Those are Kent oast houses, for the local hops. Which is why there are so many pubs in the village . . . ' In fact, the idea behind *Firelord* grew out of the graphics. Steve was doodling around on his screen and came up with a neat little rustic town house. He did a few more, and the scenery for *Firelord* was created. The plot came later.

BLAZING BREATH

And what of the plot? Well, all is not well in Torot. The Wicked Queen has tricked the local fire-breathing dragon into parting with the secret of his blazing breath, the Firestone. With this in her possession she begins to terrorise the inhabitants of Torot in a way that a dragon could only fantasise about.

Into this dangerous situation stumbles Sir Galaheart. Being a knight, and fearless into the bargain, he has vowed to search the land for the four elements of the spell of eternal youth. Sir Galaheart knows a thing or two about Evil Queens and reckons that she will gladly trade the Firestone for this youth-giving spell.

However, when Sir Galaheart enters Torot he makes a macabre discovery. All the inhabitants have vanished. So frightened are they of the Queen and her dreaded Firestone — which she uses with great zest — that they refuse to come outside their houses. Torot is instead populated with flame ghosts who romp around the countryside creating all sorts of havoc.

The last thing the ghosts want is for the Firestone to be returned to its rightful owner. As soon as Sir Galaheart begins his quest they swarm all around him, draining his essential energy. These irritating ghosties can be destroyed, but Sir Knight must first find the enchanted crystal. Once he has this, he can fire bolts of power at his assailants and protect his energy levels.

KEEP A FULL TUM!

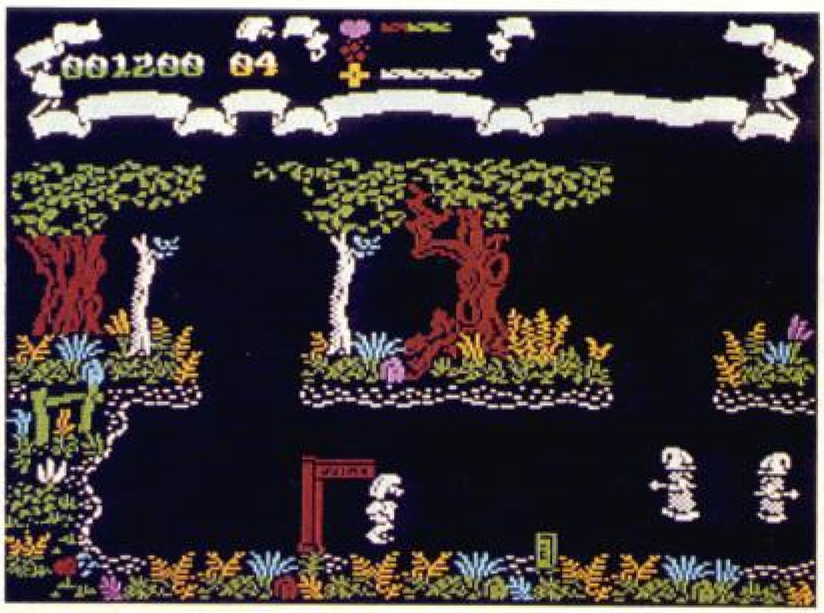
No knight has ever stayed fearless for very long on an empty stomach, so regular meals must be sought. Luckily for Sir Galaheart, the land of Torot is well-stocked with edibles, and nibblets can be picked up along the way. Every time Sir G stumbles across the odd foodstuff his energy goes up to maximum again and his appointment with the Grim Reaper is postponed once more.

Charms and grub apart, there are other useful objects lying around. These can be used for trading with the locals in return for even more useful things. Many houses around Torot have open doors. If Galaheart enters one of these he is faced with a choice of objects which he can barter for. If he's desperate, he can try stealing something when the occupier isn't looking. However, if he is caught in the process the he must stand trial. An arrow alternates between innocent and guilty and you must stop it moving when it's pointing to 'innocent'. Otherwise the punishment is death and our gallant knight loses one of his four lives.

Not one for making things too easy, Steve Crow has thrown in a few other hazards for good measure. Fireballs dropped by the Queen spring up in Galaheart's path and contact with them results in death, predictably enough.

There's a lot more to *Firelord* than all this, and quite a few things which are not explained in the instructions, as is fairly usual in Steve's games. Steve is putting the final touches to the game now — 'a few more locations and the music' — and when it's complete, the game will have 512 screens of questin', killin', eatin' and barterin'. Enough to keep you occupied when the winter knights are drawing in. Look out for *Firelord* on or around October 29. It'll cost a paltry £8.95.

Galaheart, left, prepares for a confrontation with two fire ghosts. Easy to get hot and flustered in FIRELORD



Time for a bit of barter with the warty witch. If you've nothing to exchange, you can always try to steal something while her back is turned. You'd better be good at the Guiltyometer if you're caught, though



Escape lies through the yellow archway. But what dangers lie within? And are you better off outside?



THE SPECTRUM GAME THEY SAID ''COULDN'T BE DONE''

Hugely successful on the C64, *Uridium* is now being converted for the Spectrum by another newcomer at HEWSON, Dominic Robinson.

Originally designed and written by **Andrew Braybrook**, the Spectrum version of *Uridium* retains the same scenario: you are the pilot of a Manta fighter. Out in the depths of space, vast alien Dreadnaughts silently move into orbit around each planet in the sector, preparing to drain minerals from the planets' cores to feed their interstellar power drives.

Piloting the versatile little fighter, your task is to zoom over the hull of each Dreadnaught wiping out its ancillary craft and then crippling the mother ship. In all, there are fifteen of these space leviathans to disable, and they're not just going to sit there while you take potshots at them — fighter craft are out in force.

Although you're obviously outnumbered, the Manta has been equipped with the latest technology. A powerful laser is quite capable of destroying the alien fighters. And boy, do those little blighters shift, wave upon wave swooping in at varying horrendous speeds.

SHARP REACTIONS

Even if you're successful in breaking through the defensive screens of enemy craft, flying in over the Dreadnaught hulls will test your nerves and skill to the limit. The flanges and ducts of the ship bristle with transmitter masts and require some tricky sidestepping. Sheer walls and protrusions suddenly leap into your line of vision and it's sometimes necessary to veer off at right-angles to pass through tiny gaps.

If you're still airborne and have been actively attacking the Dreadnaughts for several death-defying minutes, then the words 'Land Now!' flash up at the top of the screen. It's time to negotiate your way to the other end of the Dreadnaught and set the Manta down on the master landing strip. Then the vast bulk of the Dreadnaught can be destroyed and its shattered particles sent spiralling into the cosmos.

There's scarcely time for a breather before the Manta has to be sent screaming into the next wave of alien craft and Dreadnaught number two. Dominic Robinson is currently toying with the idea of putting in a bonus level between Dreadnaughts, awarding extra points for the waves of fighters which have been blasted, the destruction of the Dreadnaught itself, and number of Mantas you still have in reserve. Also, the finished version should boast a two player option, with each player having three lives.

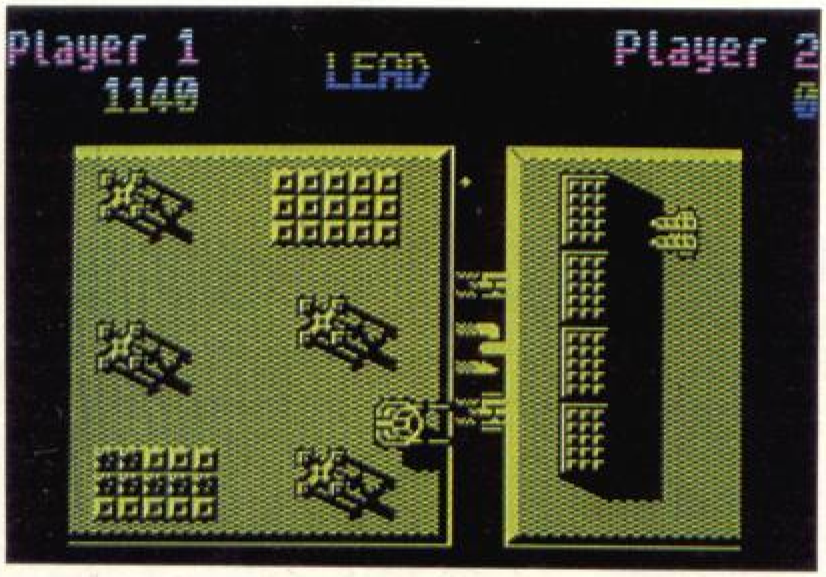
Points are awarded for knocking alien fighters out of the air, blasting apart surface features on the hull and destroying ships parked on the Dreadnaught. An extra Manta is given every ten thousand points.

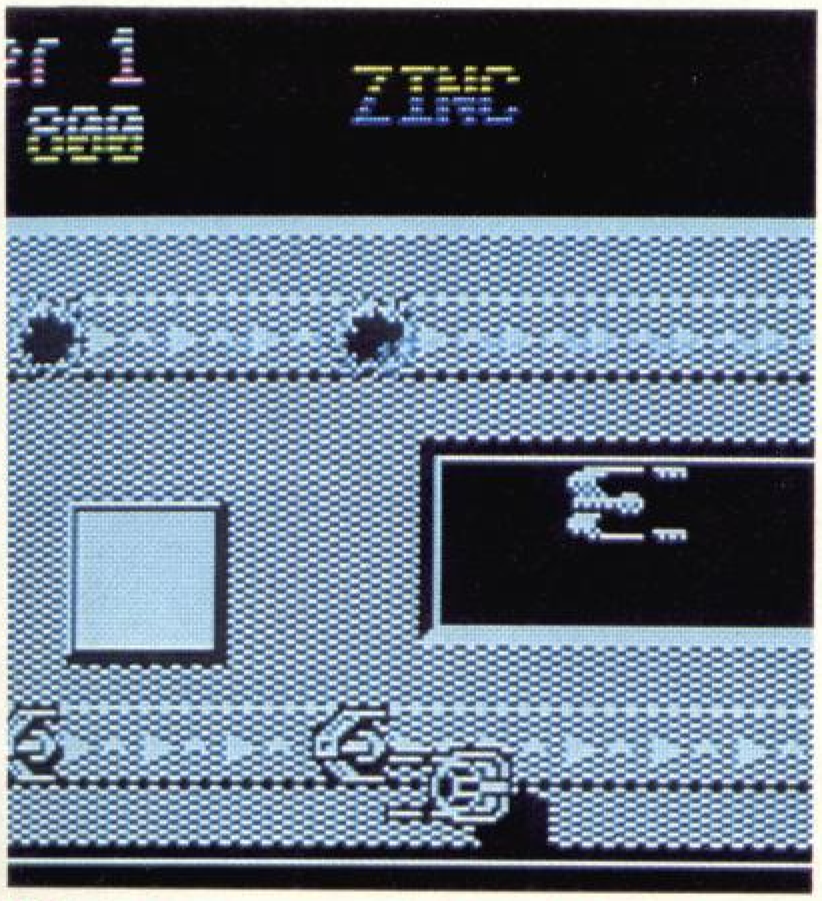
HEADACHE

Dominic reckons the biggest headache in converting *Uridium* has been getting the graphics systems to work at all, and then making it sufficiently fast: 'It's taken about ten different versions to get something which approaches a proper emulation of the Commodore game, and even then memory restrictions have meant we've had to sacrifice some of the Dreadnaught graphics which appeared in the original. Though each Dreadnaught will have a different design and layout, some of the chains and twisted links, which connected parts of the ship in the C64 game, have had to go.'

When we spoke to Dominic, the game was about a month away from completion, with only the first few Dreadnaught mother ships in place. Hopefully, by the release date — October 28 — *Uridium* will contain 15 Super-Dreadnaughts, as in the Commodore version. Each ship will be more difficult to get through than the one before. . . . £8.95 should pay for a lot of fast and furious action!

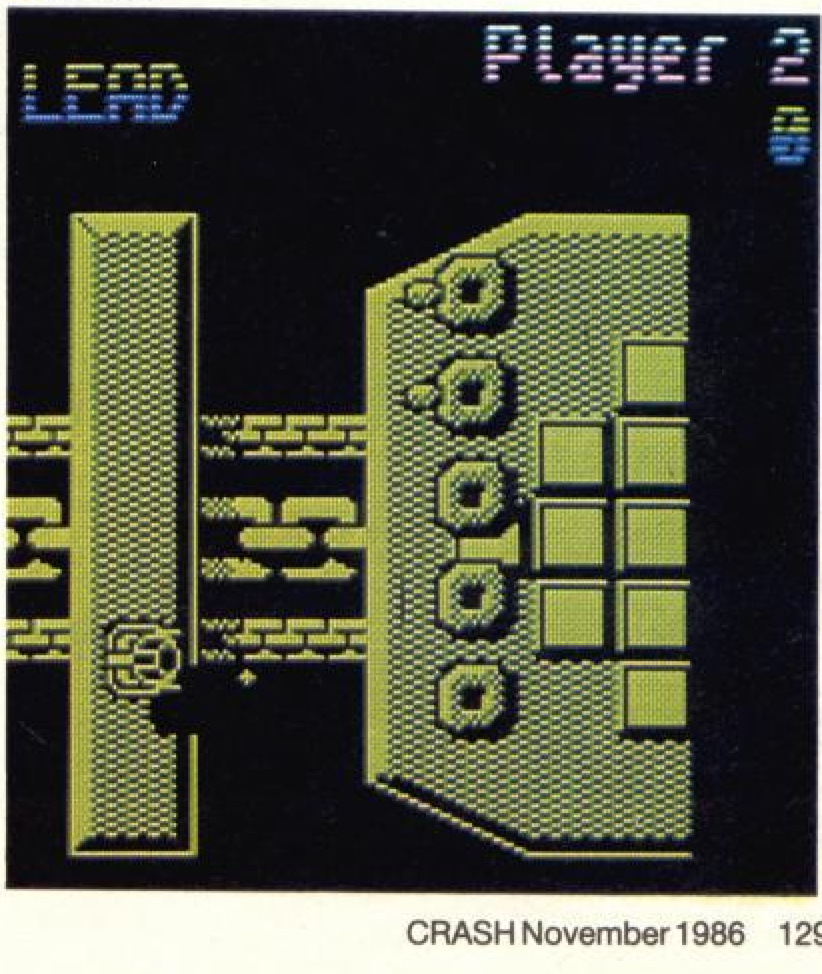
You've dodged the pylons, but it looks like curtains as a giant vent hoves into view



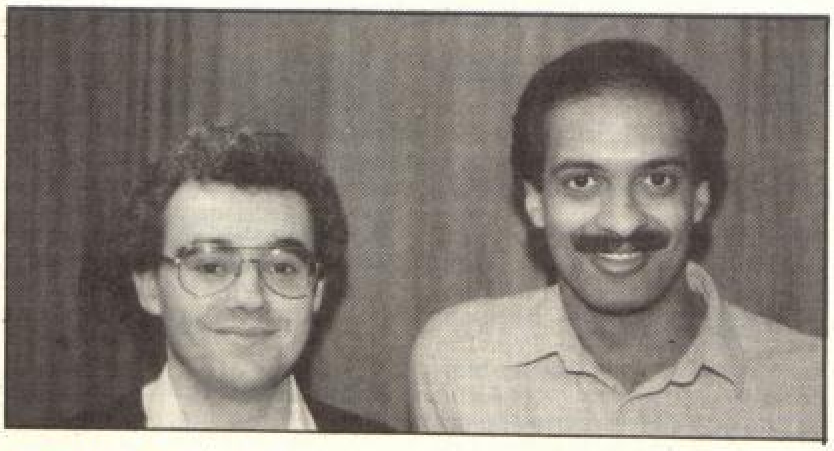


Shooting up some deck defences and dodging a fighter on level one — there's a lot of action ahead if you survive the course . . .

Attacking fighters line up in wall formation as the end of level two is reached. They don't mess about, these Dreadnaught defenders



SLICKER PROGRAMMING



Slick tricks from Lincoln-based programming team, Steve Marsden and David Cooke . . .

While Messrs Crow and Robinson have been dreaming up past and future worlds, Steve Marsden and **David Cooke** have been feverishly beavering away on a game based around everyday life in London town. You know the kind of thing: Arab terrorists, football hooligans, bombs in the Houses of Parliament . . .

The game's called *City Slicker*, and the Marsden/Cooke partnership has so far taken the game through three versions, with the programming getting steadily, um, slicker and slicker. We're on version Mk II(a) right now.

The game originally featured a number of London landmarks — yer Nelson's column, yer Post Office tower, yer actual Buck house — connected by grubby tube trains. Slick, the 'off beat tec', had to shuttle from one location to another, hot on the trail of the Arab terrorist, Abru Caddabra.

ALL CHANGE

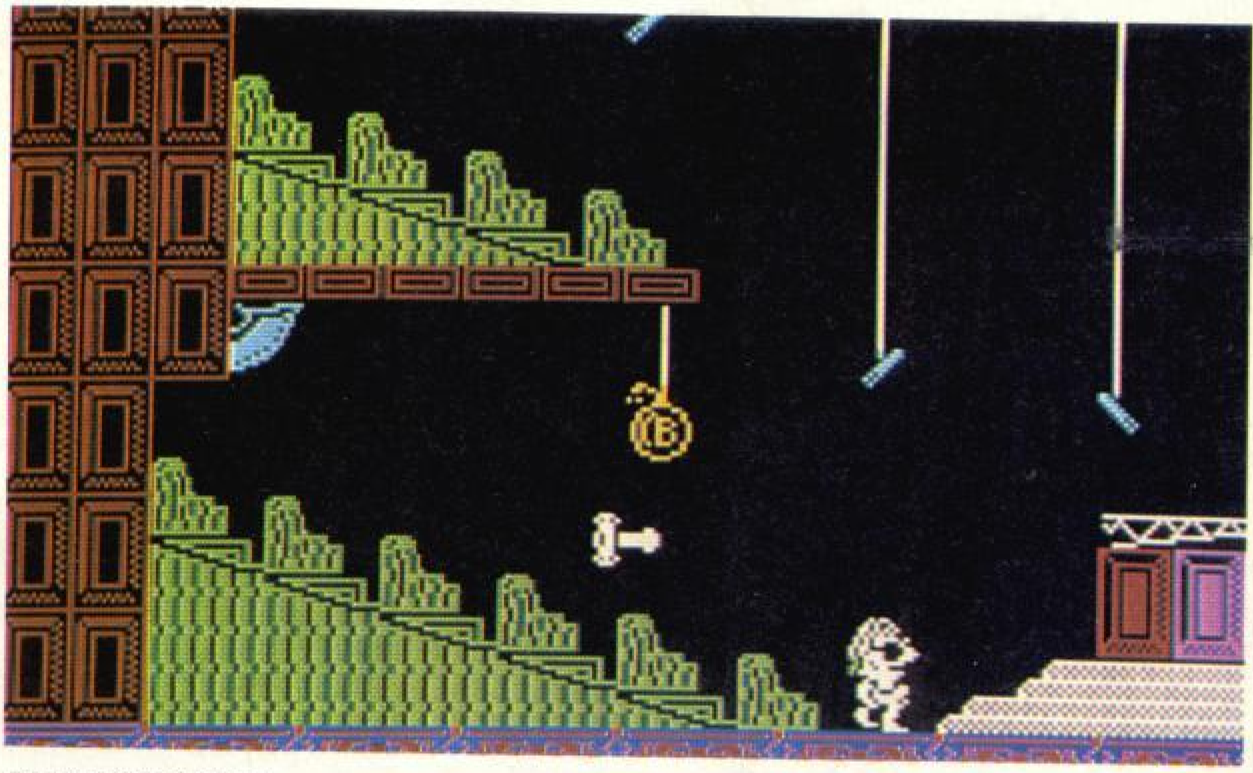
Much of this has gone now. Instead of the finely detailed screens which we had a sneak look at when we visited Marsden and Cooke in mid-August — the exterior of the Houses of Parliament was spread across three screens, every window and crenellation present — *City Slicker* is now played out on platforms and levels *inside* four locations only: the Tower of London, the British Museum, the Houses of Parliament, and Buckingham Palace.

'The outdoor scenery didn't play very well,' explains Steve. 'It's very much a room game, like *Technician Ted*, with the difference that instead of abrupt screen changes, the program flips half of one room and half of the next, so there's a sort of inbetween screen as you exit one room and enter another.'

Lost also are the animated characters of important personages - Mrs Thatcher himself, and those loony but lovable Royals. 'It was just too wasteful of memory, having specific sprites only required for certain locations. Animated characters which could roam from room to room had to go too; they're now tied to specific rooms.' All except Slick and Abru, that is.

But enough of what might have been. *City Slicker* Mk II is still stuffed with action and delightful details. Take the opening screens, for instance. As your Spectrum does a passable imitation of the clickerty-clack of a moving tube train, we see the profiles of Slick and Abru through the carriage window. Abru quickly sprays some graffiti on the glass, and slides out of sight, while Slick vows to get him.

Our cool dude detective in the House of Commons. The Speaker's hammer has a life of its own, and Abru's bomb dangles behind. Judging from the attendance, a debate on the EEC Agricultural Policy is in progress



GUNPOWDER, TREASON AND . . .

The plot is straightforward. The Arab terrorist has planted a bomb in the visitors' gallery of the House of Commons, set to detonate at midnight, and Slick must assemble the eight components of the defusing device and get it to the bomb in time. Even then you're not finished — Cooke and Marsden have added one more trial of skill which we won't reveal.

The bits and pieces of the disposal unit are, predictably, scattered all over the shop, often in places that can only be reached by shunting objects around from one room to another. Slick can leap acrobatically about, but his range depends on the energy level at the bottom of the screen. Colliding with unfriendly characters reduces energy; discovering foodstuffs increases it by the nutritional value of the food consumed. Pep pills replenish energy by 100 per cent, and you have three of these held in reserve. Use them wisely.

Objects can be picked up, stood on and dropped, and that includes some mobile thingies. If you can't operate a toggle switch to open a door, sometimes another character can be persuaded to do it for you. In one of the early locations, in the Tower of London, a disposal component is located beneath a closed trapdoor. Finding a ton weight, several rooms away, and taking it back to trapdoor allows you to smash your way through. Steve says 'there's a million and one strategies like that in the game'.

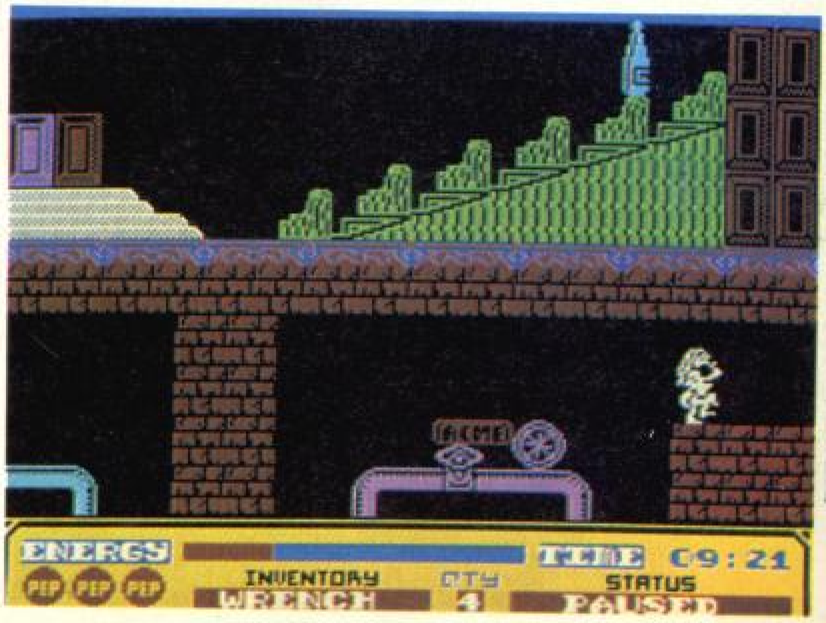
If the going gets tough, the tough start looking for a cheat mode. There is one in *City Slicker*, and it works like this: pause the game, and type in the code word. The screen will display a series of room numbers, and toggling to left and right will allow you to select the location you want. Easy, ain't it? Except you've got to discover the code word . . .

KABOOMM!!!

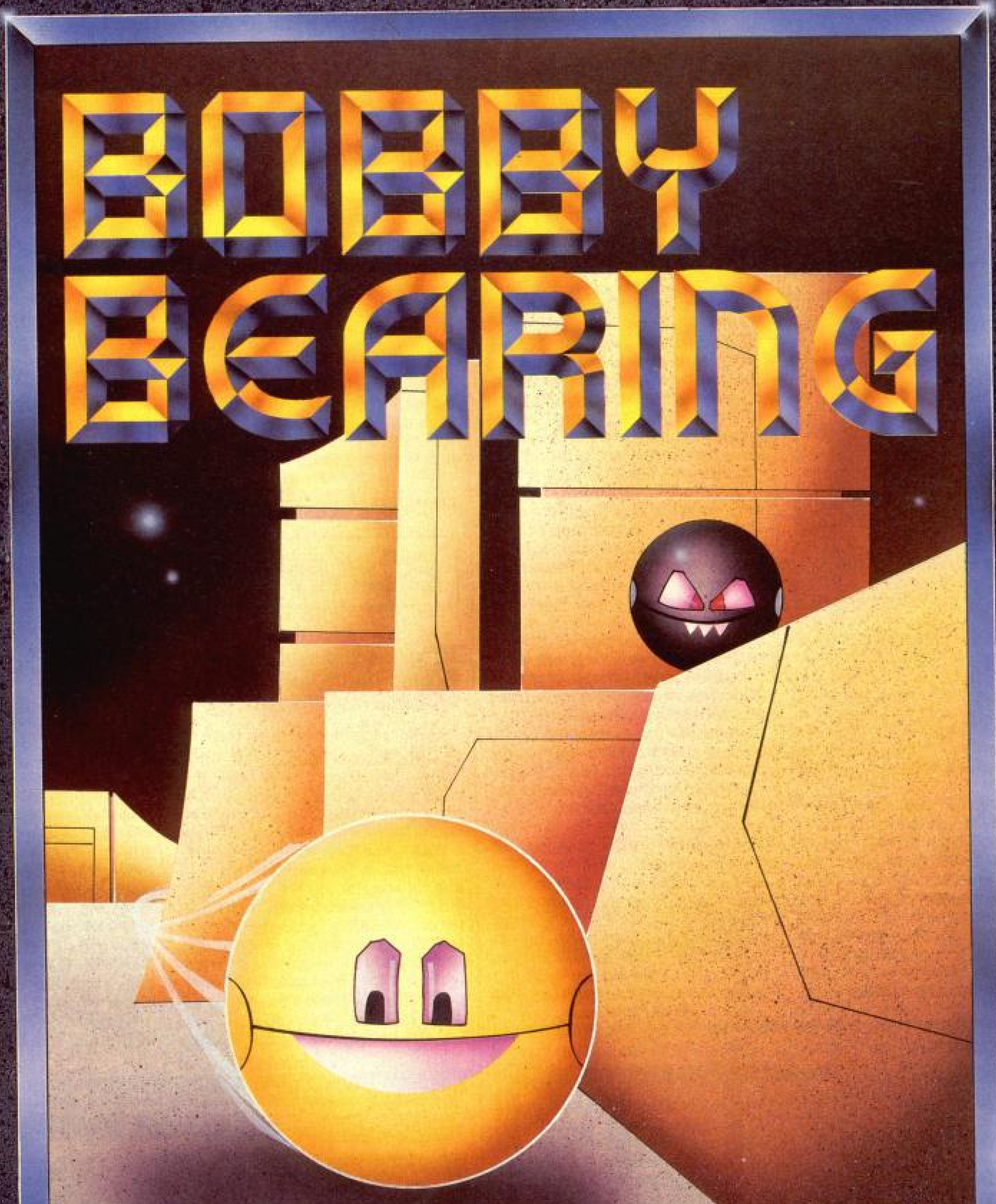
If you run out of energy and pep pills, or if the clock strikes midnight, or if you run into Abru himself, then the game ends. You are then treated to a spectacular grand finale, as the bomb shatters the Seats of Government. It takes about 30 seconds, and the screen is full of exploding pixels. Almost worth dying for.

City Slicker will be out on November 25, just missing Guy Fawkes' Day by a week or three. It'll be priced at £8.95.

Under the Seat of Government. That's part of the ACME bomb disposal kit amongst the plumbing. One MP has obviously lost his bottle



Let the good times roll!



A CRASH Smash

GAME OF THE MONTH C+VG

YOUR SINCLAIR MEGAGAME

"I love this game . . . if you don't buy this, throw away your Spectrum!" C&VG Game of the Month August 1986.

"Bobby Bearing is very nearly perfect. This may sound a bit over the top but this game deserves a whole string of superlatives." ZX Computing August 1986.

Spectrum/Commodore 64/Amstrad

VIDEO POKER

Producer: Mastertronic
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Probe Software**

This is a version of the game you'd see if you were in the arcade halls of the gambling capital of America. The idea is to get the highest hand of cards possible and win as much money as possible.

The screen shows what would be the front of an American *Video Poker* machine. The top window displays the cards, which can be turned over or changed. Below this are the hold buttons and the gambling section where you decide how many coins you are going to place as a bet.

As this is an *All American* game the money which you gamble with is American currency — you begin with twenty coins, whether you chose nickles, dimes, quarters or dollars. There are five skill levels, ranging from very easy — where predicting the cards is relatively straightforward — through to the fifth, where it really is down to pot luck.

You begin with five cards, all face down. A decision must be made on how much money to place as a bet. Pressing Space releases one coin at a time from your 'bank' into the betting window. When you're happy with the stake, a press of the Enter key reveals all . . .

At this point you can have a completely new hand dealt or choose to hold certain cards. Pressing Enter activates the dealer. The screen will now either start flashing madly, signifying that you have won enormous loads of boodle, or it won't, meaning that you haven't. The game continues in this way until you're totally nickle-less. Just like real life, really.

CRITICISM

● **" You can't win real money on this 'machine' so there doesn't really seem to be much point in playing it. Many games of this type are well presented and also offer a good simulation of the game. This is not the case with** Video Poker. **The graphics work well but it sometimes a bit hard to distinguish between the different suits. The way in which the cards turn over is fairly slick but it does take a while, which can be frustrating. The sound is a bit of a let down as there are no tunes and only a few effects. I'd keep well away from this game if I was you. "**

● *"* Video Poker *is one of the most boring poker games around. The game, as with most betting games, is good fun at first; but the pretty graphics and neat presentation don't hide what the game really consists of — not much.* Video Poker *is not really a game of skill at all. The whole game is based on luck — most of it bad! The different levels are a good idea and are structured well, and the idea of having a screen which gives you the odds is quite nice, but only superficial. The only reality in* Video Poker *is that you always lose in the end. "*

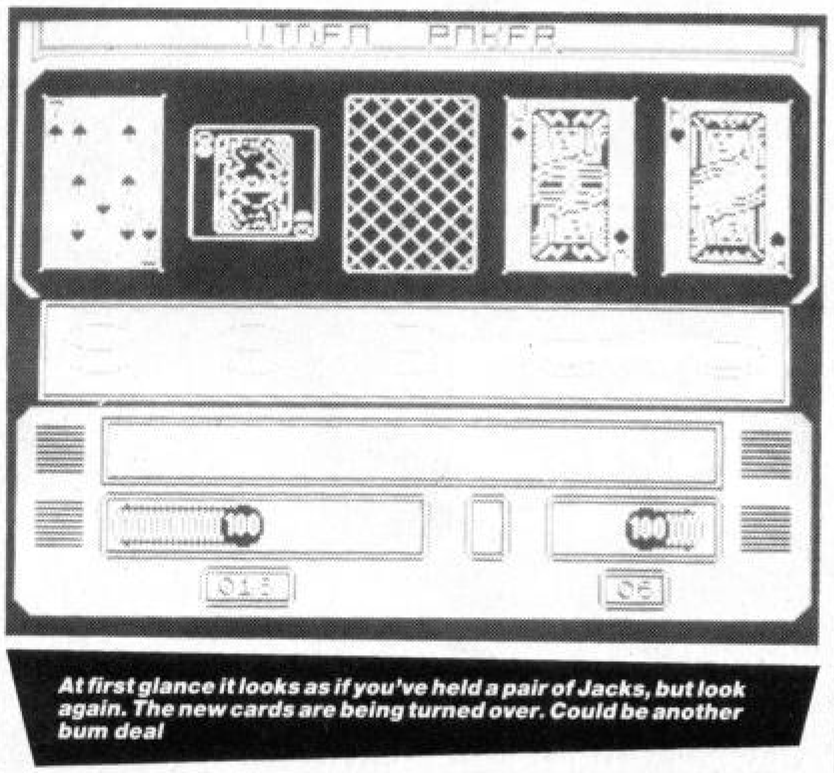
● " I wouldn't really play this sort of game anyway, whether it was on a computer or in a casino! Having said that, I did get about half an hour's fun out of *Video Poker* but after that the addictiveness began to wear off. It seemed that however craftily I played my hand the computer always ended up winning. The whole thing began to dissolve into a game of luck and the skill involved in a real game of poker was lost. If I did pay out the £1.99 asking price I wouldn't be too fed up with my purchase, really. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: ENTER to start, SPACE to select coins, ENTER for cards to be dealt, keys 1 to 5 to retain cards
Joystick: keyboard only
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: adequate
Graphics: no surprises
Sound: spot effects when you win or lose
Skill levels: five
Screens: one main playing screen
General rating: Another poker/fruit machine simulation, competent but uninspiring



Use of computer	**38%**
Graphics	**36%**
Playability	**30%**
Getting started	**44%**
Addictive qualities	**28%**
Value for money	**39%**
Overall	**35%**



At first glance it looks as if you've held a pair of Jacks, but look again. The new cards are being turned over. Could be another bum deal

BUMP SET SPIKE

Producer: Mastertronic
Retail Price: **£2.99**
Author: **Paul Ranson**

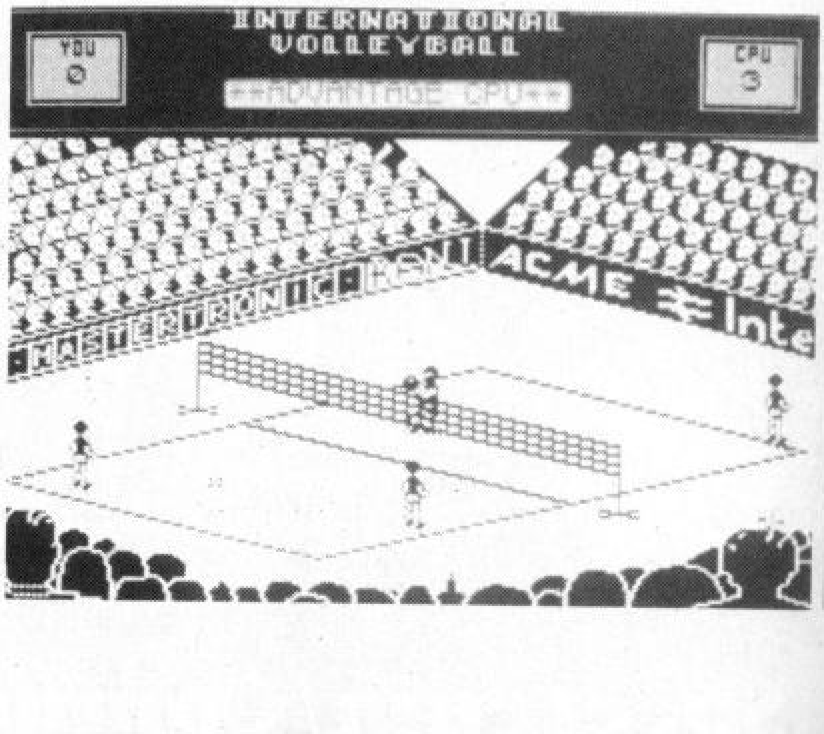
Volleyball comes to the Spectrum! The player controls two volleyball players on a court. The controls are the usual four directions, plus a fire button and two keys to select which player to control. When you are serving, hit the fire key, and a little cross moves away from the player presently undur your control. When the fire key is released, the ball travels through the air to wherever the cross was. The computer will then have a go at returning it.

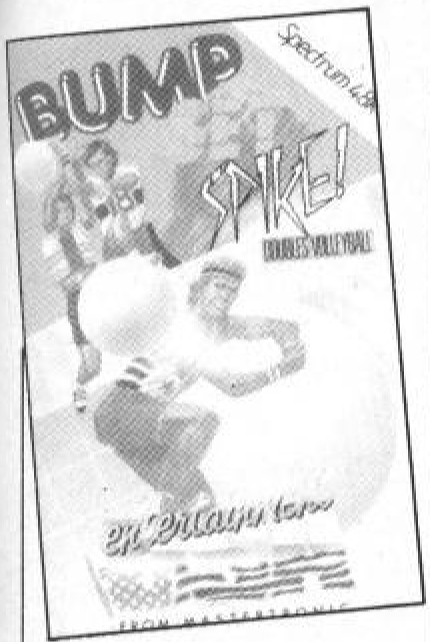
If the ball comes back over the net, you've got to get a player to the point where the ball is going to land, indicated by the cross, and then press and hold the fire button. Once the ball is caught by the player, the cross starts moving away from the player in the direction the player is facing. When the fire key is released, the ball hurtles off to where the cross is . . .

You can either bash the ball straight over the net, or if you're feeling fancy, pass it to the other player who then bumps it over. This is quite a useful tactic — if you only use one player, since the ball only travels in the direction a player is facing, the ball merely gets returned to the opposing player who just hit it.

A good trick is to try to get close to the net and then just bump it

The little message box in the status area rubs it home that Cameron is being thrashed by the computer — 3-0 no less. Not a sporting lad, our Cam!





over, this usually wins the point. The computer opponent is no slouch: if you get in the lead, it suddenly starts to play a bit better, so just when you thought you had the hang of the game, things get a whole lot harder.

Scoring is simple, you only score a point if you win the point whilst serving, otherwise you just get to serve. The first team to score ten points wins.

CRITICISM

● **" Being an avid watcher of volleyball,** Bump Set Spike **aroused more than average interest in me. The monochrome graphics didn't exactly leap out of the screen at me, and the small, badly animated characters don't look particularly good. I hoped it would play better than it looks — it doesn't! Though it does pass as volleyball in the sense that you have to hit a ball over a net, in other aspects, it falls down on realism soooo much! The ball regularly flies through the net without hindrance, and if you're lucky, you can place the ball in front of the net without any problem. The whole game is pretty bad, even for £2.99. "**

● *" Volleyball always seemed to me to be a very boring sport: the computer simulation is no different. Despite the lack of instructions the game was fairly easy to get into as there are only a limited number of things to do. Once you do figure out the instructions and actually get competent at playing (it took me two goes!) there doesn't really seem to be much point in playing it any more. The graphics although being run-of-the-mill work quite well. The sound on the other hand is awful: there are no tunes, and the effects are minimal. There isn't enough in this game to keep me playing for any length of time. I can't recommend it. "*

● " Two man Volleyball? But then again never having seen another volleyball simulation, what's to be expected? Well I'll tell you: the graphics are Mr.Simple and the colour, well — there isn't any. The playability is rather awkward to say the least as switching between two players can be very difficult. There is no guarantee, if you manage to get your player on the cross, or what you think is on the cross, that you actually stop the ball. Overall, poor by all standards. Not a very worthy game, even for a budget title. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable: up, down, left, right, fire
Joystick: none
Keyboard play: a little disjointed
Use of colour: minimalist
Graphics: stick men, mainly
Sound: not impressive
Skill levels: one
Screens: one
General rating: A very unsatisfying simulation

Use of computer	38%
Graphics	44%
Playability	37%
Getting started	42%
Addictive qualities	36%
Value for money	39%
Overall	38%

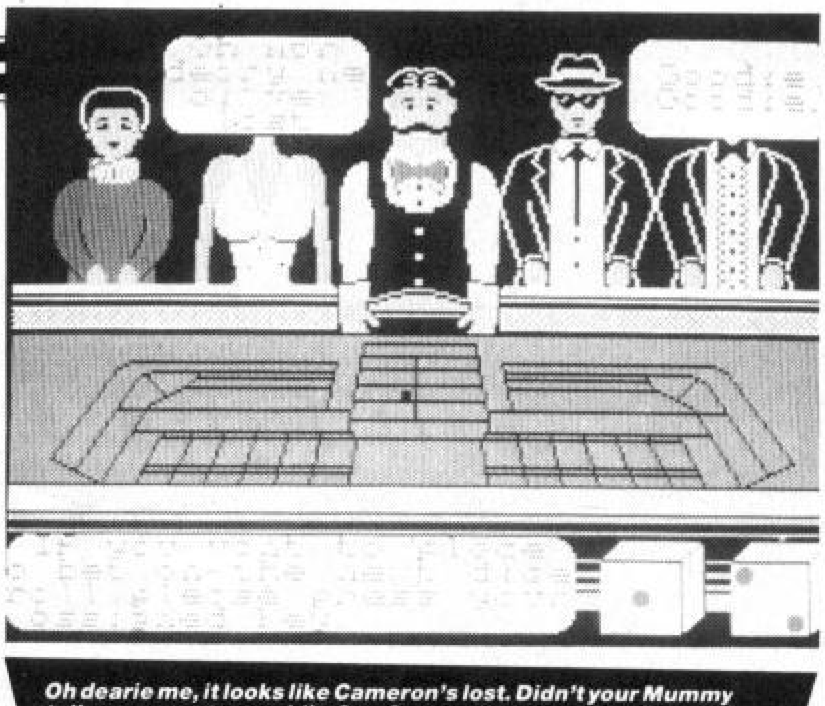
MIAMI DICE

Producer: Bug Byte
Retail Price: **£2.99**
Author: **Binary Design**

Well, it's down to the old casino with the local low life: the game is craps, the stakes are high! Choose one of eight gamblers, take your money and make every roll count.

The game is all about rolling dice and betting on the outcome. However, being an American game, it naturally has a highly involved set of rules. In essence, it's rather like roulette without the wheel. The player who is 'shooter', throws the dice. A total of seven or eleven is a win, rolling two, three or twelve loses and any other total else means the shooter keeps rolling. If the first roll wasn't a winning or losing throw shooter has try to roll the same number again before rolling a seven. The shooter keeps rolling until a seven or the winning number comes up.

Players can bet either on the outcome of the shooter's efforts, or on a particular number coming up. Four punters and the croupier appear on the screen — the craps rollers are chosen from a list of eight including such dubious characters as Sexy Sarah, Big Dick and Ahmed Arab. Each character takes it in turn to be the shooter. There is a short pause, and during a turn, any of the four players can hit their 'bet' button and then bet on the roll. A small window appears, and using the joystick controls, the amount staked can be set. Then the bet is laid. The window changes to show a portion of the table and the player can scroll around the table and decide where to place the bet.



Oh dearie me, it looks like Cameron's lost. Didn't your Mummy tell you never to gamble, Cam?

Then the shooter shakes the dice with a bit of on screen animation, they roll around the table, and the total is shown on the screen. Players are then free to place bets again on the next roll. If a player has a successful session, when they decide to quit the game, they take a 'cheque' away with them — a code comes up which can be typed in at the beginning of another session to increase the kitty.

CRITICISM

● **" There probably will never be a good gambling game, somehow staking tiny little sprites doesn't get the adrenalin pumping the way putting your shirt on the line does. I suppose if a bunch of four people were in a fairly 'happy' mood, loading this up could provide a few moments diversion, but that's about it. The animation is a bit crass, and the speech even crasser, which manages to break just about all bounds of good taste. I must admit, it never raised even a chuckle once. What a load of old craps.**

● *" Yes, the packaging is very nice, and the idea is a good one, as Craps has potential for a computer game, but the implementation is lacking a great deal. I started playing this, quite ready to give it a rave, after having read all about the speech and so on mentioned on the inlay, but now, I don't really think I want to look at* Miami Dice *again. The graphics, while being big, colourful and all that, aren't properly animated, and the speech is only just recognisable;*



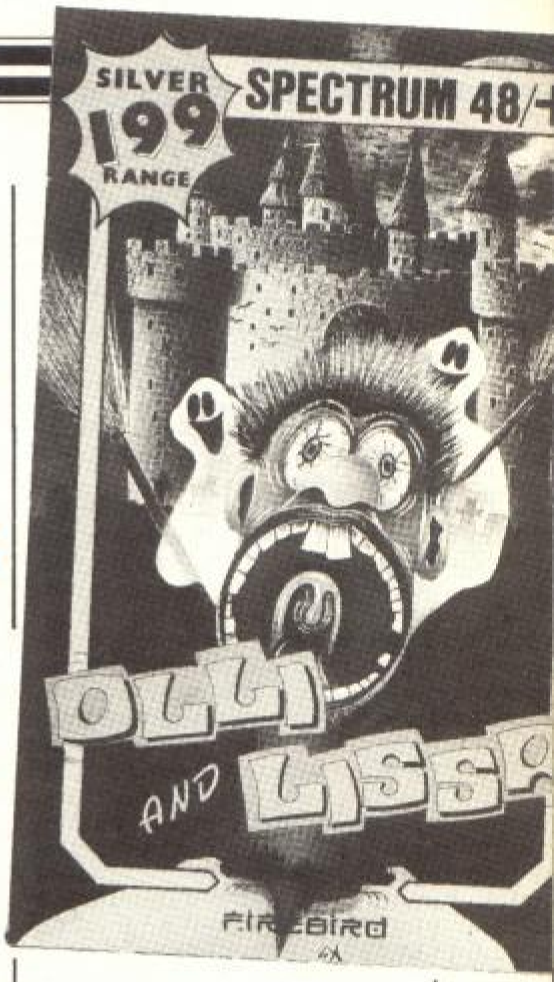
my general feeling of the game is that it works, but just doesn't seem to be worth loading. "

● " Crikey! What the heck have Bug Byte done here? After wading through the apalling instructions and finding out all the quirks of the game, I came to the conclusion that all the hassle was just not worth it. Goodness only knows what Miami has got to do with craps playing — surely it would have been more sensible to call it *Las Vegas Dice? I found Miami Dice* was very boring to play — even if you're playing a four player game. A disappointing game. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: I, Z, M, O place bets; O left; P right; Q up; A down
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor
Keyboard play: a bit wobbly
Use of colour: vivid and useful
Graphics: some animation, helpful windows — a bit tacky
Sound: unintelligible speech
Skill levels: one
Screens: one
General rating: Doesn't quite come off, somehow . . .

Use of computer	56%
Graphics	54%
Playability	38%
Getting started	36%
Addictive qualities	33%
Value for money	39%
Overall	37%



OLLI AND LISSA

Producer: Firebird
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Roger Danison**

Those dawgawn Yankies are at it again. Trying to buy up our ancestral heritage and ship it back to their homeland to give it a dollop o' *culch*.

This time they're after one of our lesser known historical monuments, Shilmore castle. Hidden amongst the craggy peaks of the highlands of Scotland the castle is home to no-one but a couple of strange creatures called Olli and Lissa — who kiss each other a lot — and a crabby old ghost called Sir Humphrey.

As ghosts are destined always to haunt their own abode, the migration to the US of A means that Sir Humphrey will have to scoot off there too. How will he cope with the culture shock? No green and pleasant land over there, only a lot of smog, the odd mugger or two and plenty of noise in an LA suburb. Olli and Lissa are naturally worried about losing their spooky friend so they set about hatching a plan to scare off Eugene Port-Cullis III (Jnr) away.

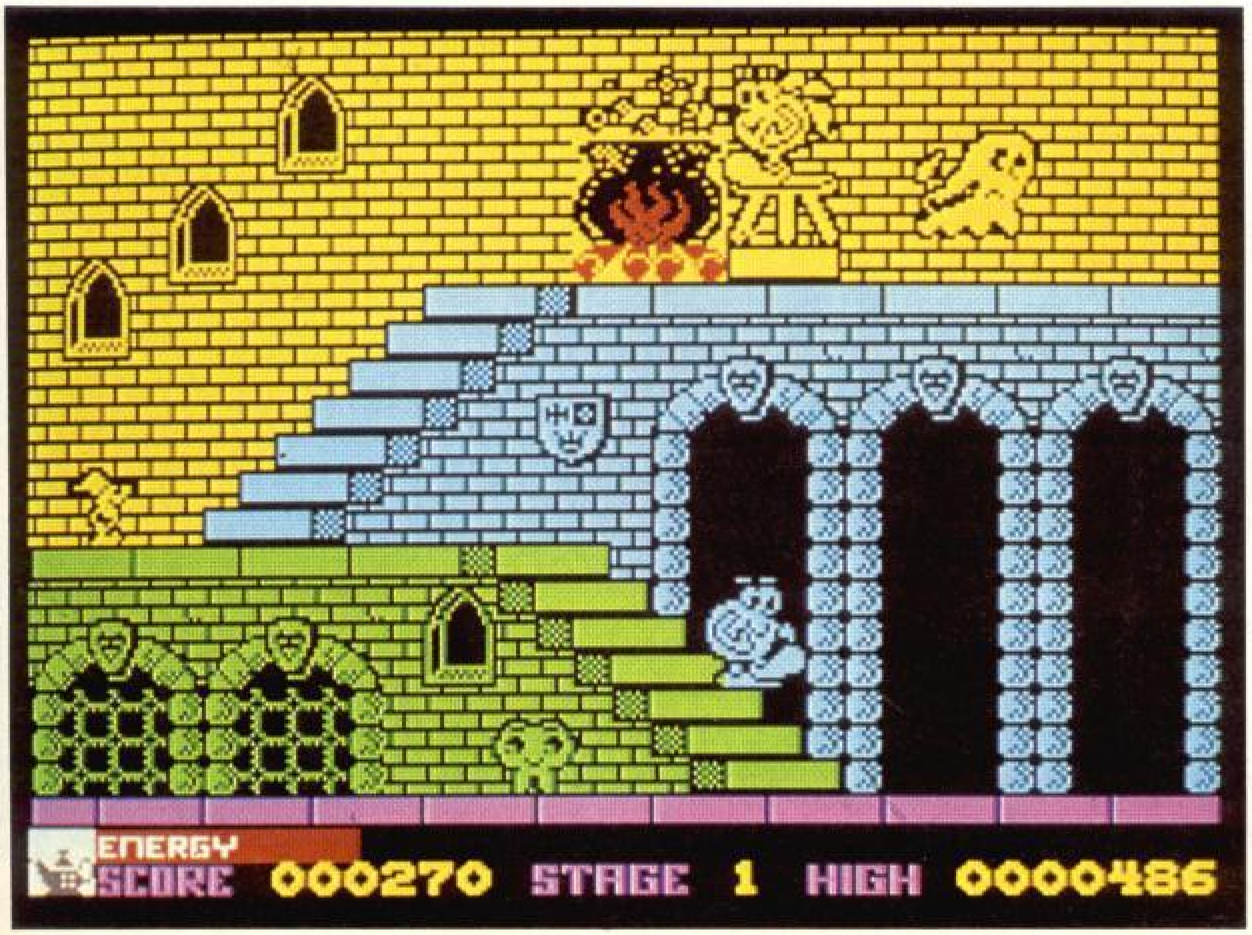
Sir Humphrey decides that people nowadays don't take ghosties and ghoulies very seriously. All that jangling of chains and going 'Whooo' is very old hat. What is needed is an unseen presence to scare the living daylights out of Eugene P and dissuade him from buying the castle. Unfortunately, Sir Humphrey isn't one of those sophisticated ghosts who can materialise when and where he pleases. In order to make himself invisible he needs a special potion which must be simmered in a moderately hot cauldron for a couple of hours. So this is where Olli and Lissa come in.

Olli must scamper around Shilmore Castle collecting the vital ingredients while Sir Humphrey stirs the pot and shouts instructions and Lissa provides moral support — as well as the odd smackerooni for Olli. The only problem is that Shilmore Castle has more than one ghost. Sir Humphrey may be a grumpy old so-and-so, but he's a decent snake at heart. The other ghosts in the castle are a snooty crowd and are rather looking forward to a sojourn in sunny America for a while, out of the way of all those nasty Scottish draughts. They set out to make Olli's task ever more difficult by appearing in his path and dazing the poor mite into losing precious time.

There's a strict time limit for each object to be collected shown by a meter at the bottom of the screen. Olli must avoid the obstacles in his path and collect the required ingredient as Sir Humphrey demands. If Olli doesn't make it to the cauldron in time then the game is over and it's back to square one.

Each time a nasty ghosty makes contact with Olli he falls over and it takes him some time to recover, meanwhile the clock is being eaten away. However, once Olli manages to get the correct object and put it in Sir Humphrey's pot then he gets a huge girlie kiss from Lissa (eugh!) and progresses to the next screen. There are eight objects in all and once these have been added to Sir H's secret recipe he can down it in true Heeland style and become invisible. Then hopefully Eugene Port-Cullis III (Jnr) will take himself and his horrid entourage back to the States, leaving Olli and Lissa to carry on doing yucky things to each other and Sir Humphrey to get on with some serious spooking.

Lissa stirs the cooking pot while Sir Humphrey gets impatient. Olli descends in search of goodies



CRITICISM

● **" Yet another great budget title from FIREBIRD. What's happening? At first it looks like a game for 'younger' people, as it contains cartoon-like characters and the idea behind the game is simple. After a few goes I reckon that if this was given to me when I was younger I'd have been tearing out my hair and screaming with frustration. Gameplay is fast — you really have to get a move on to complete the first level — and it's incredibly tricky. Timing has to be exact if you're going to jump that nasty. It looks pretty, has excellent sound effects and is compelling and playable too. "**

● *" Olli and Lissa is driving me mad. And what's more, I don't mind; its great fun! The music on the title screen is remarkable, but even this aural havoc pales into insignificance when compared to the game. The graphics are horribly cute and the whole game reeks of being 'nice'. I really hated the so-called reward on the title screen; who wants a picture of Olli sneaking a sly one with Lissa while nobody's looking?* Olli and Lissa *is probably one of the best games I've seen from* FIREBIRD *for a long time. (Hang on, that's not saying much, is it!) Well worth that awkward two quid lying in the bottom of your pocket. Definitely one of the better budget games around. "*

● " Blimey! FIREBIRD aren't half putting out a lot of budget games at the moment. I just hope that they are all as good as *Olli and Lissa*. The first thing that strikes you is the way that the screen is laid out. Each screen is either fully monochromatic or splits into monochromatic bits. This gives you lots of colour on the screen but with no clashing. The game keeps very strictly to the storyline and this makes it all the more fun to play. I found it hard to get started, but once I'd got the jumping sorted out the rest was plain sailing. Although the bubbling pot crying out for special items is borrowed from *Knight Lore* and the monochromatic layout may be a bit old hat, *Olli and Lissa* is a perfectly acceptable budget game. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair, Protek/AGF
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: very competent
Graphics: good, if cute
Sound: jolly little tune at the beginning
Skill levels: one
Screens: eight
General rating: solid, scary, entertainment.

Use of computer	78%
Graphics	80%
Playability	77%
Getting started	71%
Addictive qualities	77%
Value for money	85%
Overall	78%

PRODIGY

Producer: Electric Dreams
Retail Price: **£7.99**
Author: **Mev Dinc**

The evil Wardlock is a genius. Unfortunately, the Wardlock's talents are misplaced and instead of using its genetic experimentation capacity for the good of mankind the machine known as the Wardlock done just the opposite — creating horrendous genetic experiments.

Two by-products of his dabblings are Solo, a synthetic man, and Nejo, a baby. These two outcasts are doomed to wander the strange world of the Mechlabs forever, unless they can escape. But since the Mechlabs are infested with by-products of the evil Wardlock's previous experiments, escape is far from easy. However, Solo has a plan: if he can expose the evil workings of the Wardlock to the outside world, then the experiments will come to an end and the Wardlock will be destroyed.

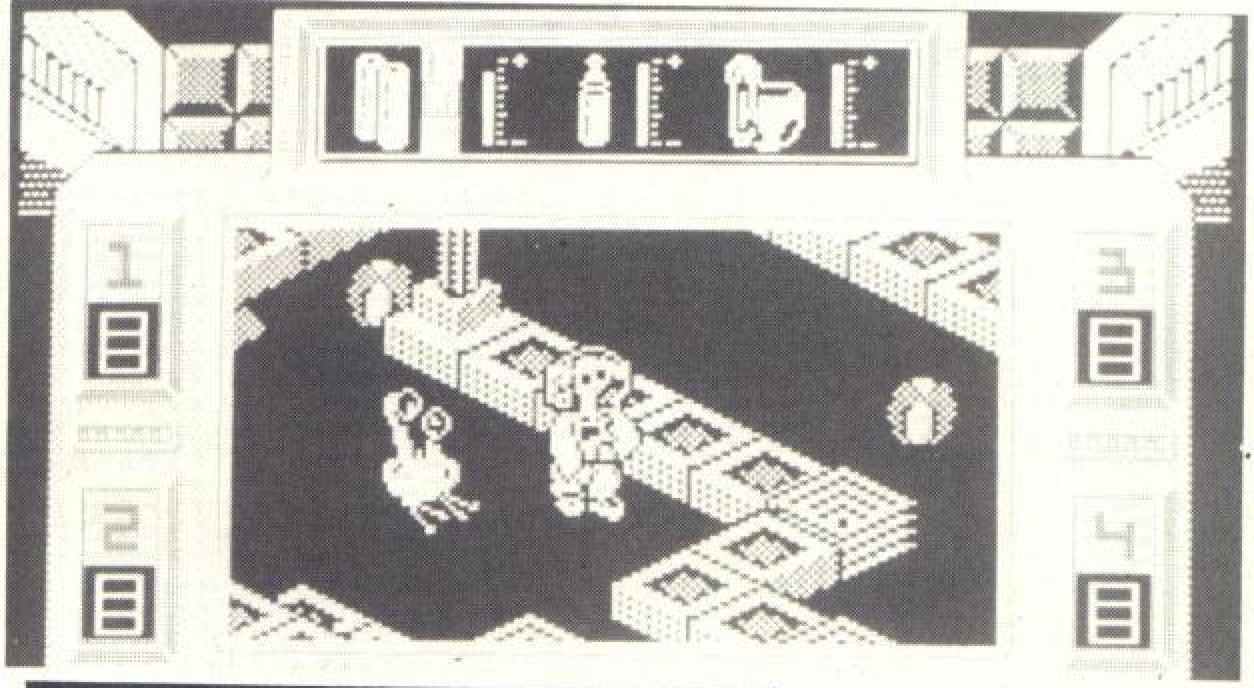
The Globjewels and Bloberites are uncomely creatures which wander around the Mechlabs terrorising everything that comes their way. As Solo and Nejo try to find a way out of the nightmarish world in which they are imprisoned, they are constantly hassled by these inhuman beings. Fortunately, Solo is in possession of a nifty bubblegum gun which can be used to temporarily disable the nasties encountered.

The Mechlabs consist of three vast dimensional mazes. There are four sections altogether: the Ice zone, Fire Zone, Tech zone and Veggie Zone. These are distinguished by different colours. Solo must trek through the Mechlabs, searching for power crystals. Once found, these can be taken to a computer room and used to reprogram the computer causing it to open exits to the Outside World.

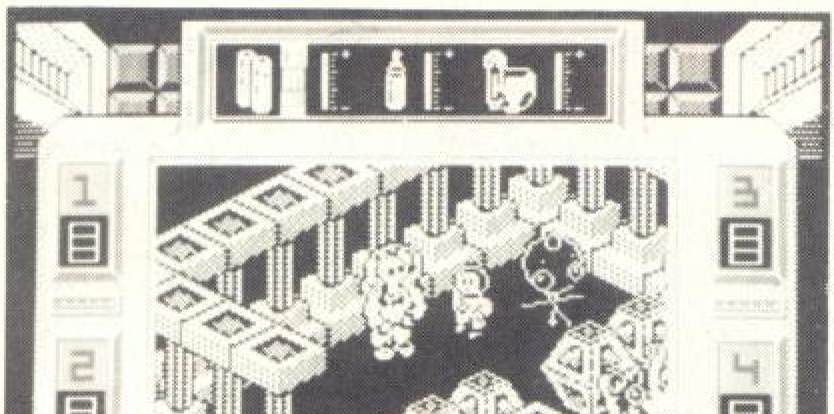
Unfortunately, Solo has more to worry about than just the Globjewels and the Bloberites: tagging alongside him is the baby, Nejo. Lacking a natural mother, Nejo attaches himself to the nearest object, which happens to be Solo. Looking after a toddler is one thing, but trying to keep him in perfect health in a place as fundamentally unhealthy as the Mechlabs is something else! Solo must watch out for nappy rash and make sure that the baby has clean daipers every now and then. Babies must also be kept spanking clean, so water and bath facilities must be found and used along the way. Taking Nejo through the maze is quite a problem, since he often finds it difficult to move around obstacles. So, Solo has to guide him quite a bit.

A readout at the bottom of the screen provides hints from time to time, and the status area at the to monitors oxygen levels and the condition of the baby you're looking after.

For the first six minutes of a game, the nasties are fairly harmless but if you touch them during this period they get really heavy



A horrid bog-eyed Cameron look-alike follows synthi-man down a corridor! Yeuchh!



Synthi-man and the parentless baby make their way through the hostile environment as a floating nasty hovers . . .

CRITICISM

● " **Well the graphics ARE quite pretty, and the sprites move quite well, but I don't really think that** Prodigy **is a very good game. The control keys remind me of the days when it was different to have control keys that fitted your finger patterns, but nowadays its more common to find a game with redefinable keys. Argh!! I reckon the music would be more aptly labelled noise, as it is absolutely awful. The game itself is almost playable, and therefore, quite addictive, but I don't think that it'll be a big success. 'Nuff said?!"**

● *"Who fancies a challenge then? You'll certainly get one if you buy this game because it is very, very hard. I grew more disappointed the more I played* Prodigy, *not due the game itself but more to do with my inability to play it successfully. The graphics are surprisingly good. The playing area scrolls smoothly and quickly and the characters are excellently animated and detailed. The various component parts of the playing area are also very pretty. The sound is brilliant: there is a wonderful tune on the title screen and the effects during the game are great. If you manage to work out what you have to do and then get past the nasties in the first six minutes then the game is a little easier to play, but if you mess that part up then you've had it. Controlling your synthi-man is a little on the tricky side as the keys used are all in a line, but after lots of practice it gets better . . . "*

● " The first thing that struck me about *Prodigy* was the very smart way in which it is presented. The graphics are all very well drawn and very detailed. All of the characters are very well animated and move about very smoothly. The sound at the beginning of the game is superb — even better than the *Ping Pong* music, it features loads of very realistic drum effects and synthesised sounds — that I presume are sampled, but still belt out of the Spectrum speaker at a fair old wattage. I felt that the game was quite unplayable to start with, as the small screen and consistent dying made it very hard to get used to. Once mastered, the game is exciting to play and quite addictive. If you can get over the limited play area and awkward key positions then you'll find quite a good game, one definitely worth a look at. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: left 6, right 7, up 9, down 8, fire bubblegum 0, pick-up Q, drop W, pause SPACE
Joystick: Kempston, Interface II
Keyboard play: quite responsive
Use of colour: monochromatic play area
Graphics: detailed and well animated
Sound: clever tune at the beginning
Skill levels: four
Screens: scrolling play area
General rating:

Use of computer	69%
Graphics	84%
Playability	67%
Getting started	66%
Addictive qualities	72%
Value for money	65%
Overall	68%

GIANT POSTERS!

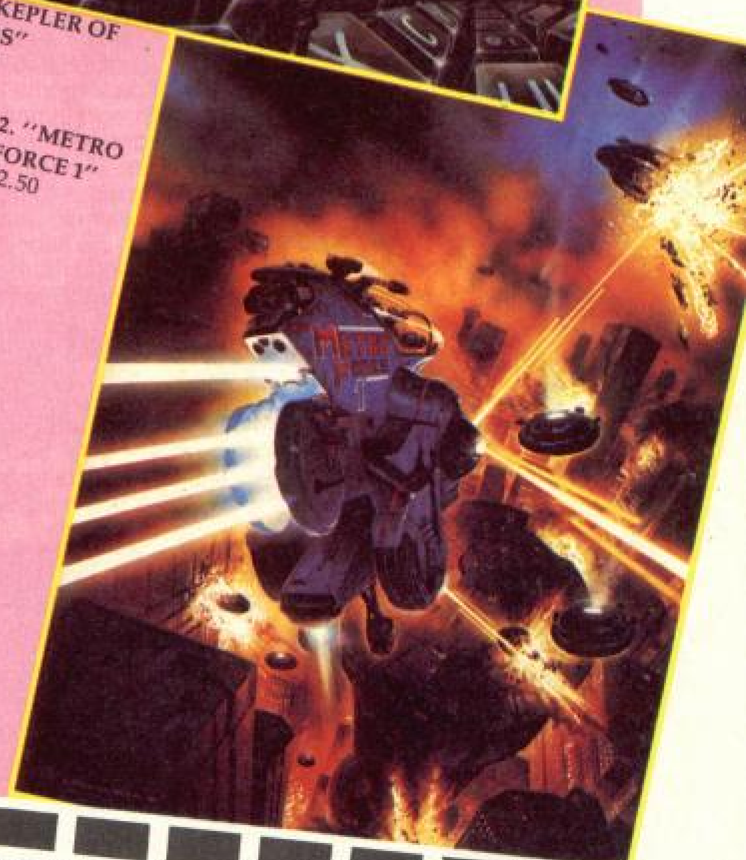
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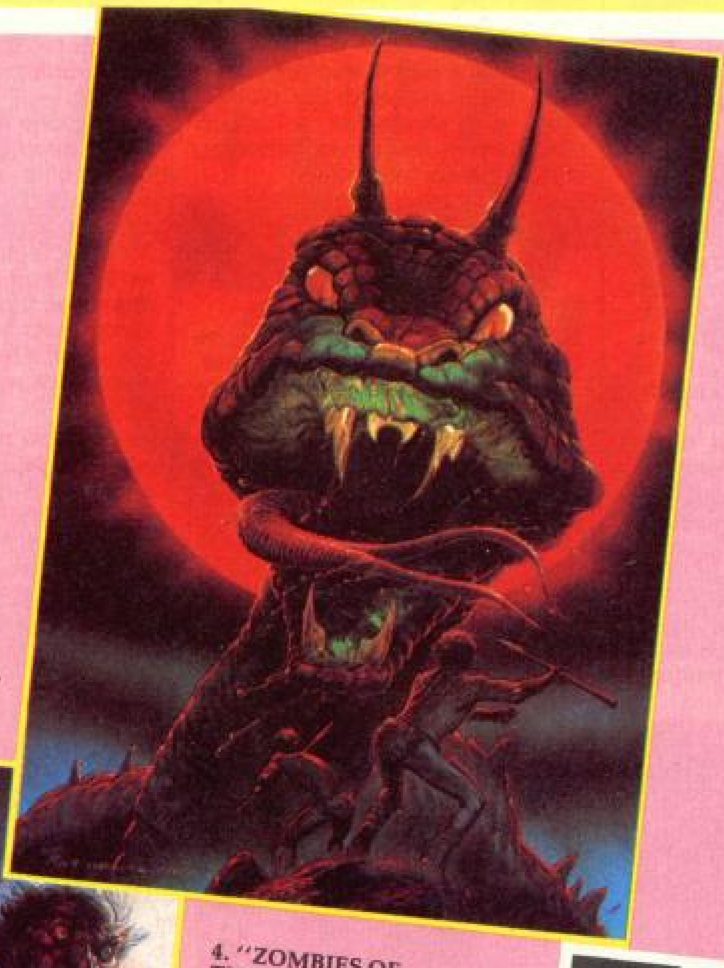
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Reviews

DEACTIVATORS

Producer: Ariolasoft
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **System Software/Tigress**

It's the graveyard shift in the security room of a highly secret office complex. All the security guards are happily slumbering, unaware of the terrible fate that has overcome the building.

Suddenly, the smoke detectors go off, and as the guards rub the sleep out of their eyes, the full horror of the situation slowly dawns on them. The buildings have been attacked by highly sophisticated terrorists. Bombs have been planted all over the place, set with time fuses. The time limit to the game is set by the fuses on the bombs.

Normally, the security services can cope with this sort of everyday occurrence, and would just send in the security droids to sort things out and bang a few heads together. But things are getting out of hand. The terrorists have got into the central data banks, reprogrammed the security droids and then wrecked the computer.

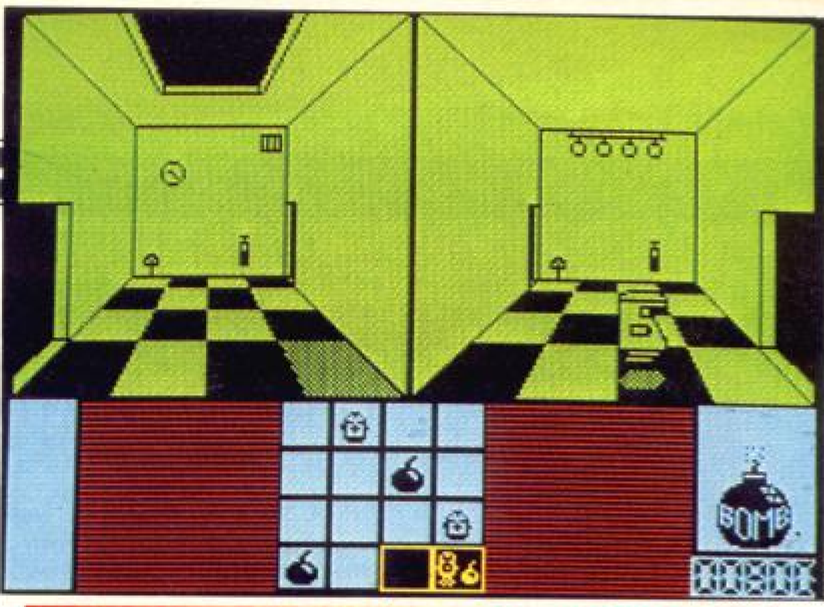
So there's nothing for it, but to call in the Deactivators. These little chaps are a dedicated team of super droids controlled via an icon system in the lower display area, below the view of a pair of rooms. Pressing the fire key brings up four icons: select a droid, throw, scan, and return to the game. In scan mode, a cursor can be moved around a small plan of the building displaying the contents of rooms in detail. Select a droid allows the cursor to be moved around the plan screen, and a droid selected. This droid can then be moved around from room to room. The main display reveals the room the droid is in, and an adjacent room.

Each of the five levels of the game is progressively harder. The first level is a simple four by four grid in which there are three bombs to be destroyed. Rooms are linked and many of them have several exits, although some have windows, transporters, or poles which allow vertical travel. Circuit boards can be found in some locations. The circuits have differing effects when they are moved to the computer room and plugged in: force fields are deactivated; transporters initialised and lights turned on in dark rooms for instance.

Reprogrammed security droids are out to get the unarmed Deactivators. The only way to kill a security droid is to get it to follow the Deactivators around and fall through the floor a few times. Usually, getting a bomb out of the building requires team work. The bomb gets picked up by one droid, and then thrown through a window to another droid. You should make sure that the other droid is ready to catch the bomb when it is thrown, as bouncing a bomb around tends to make it explode!

The throwing system itself is a question of selecting the throw icon, and then chucking the bomb, circuit board or whatever when the indicator reaches the angle desired. However, adjacent rooms tend to have different gravities, or even totally different orientations — presented on screen upside down, or sideways.

Should a bomb explode, then both the room and the clumsy droid are eliminated — which could mean the game becomes impossible to complete.



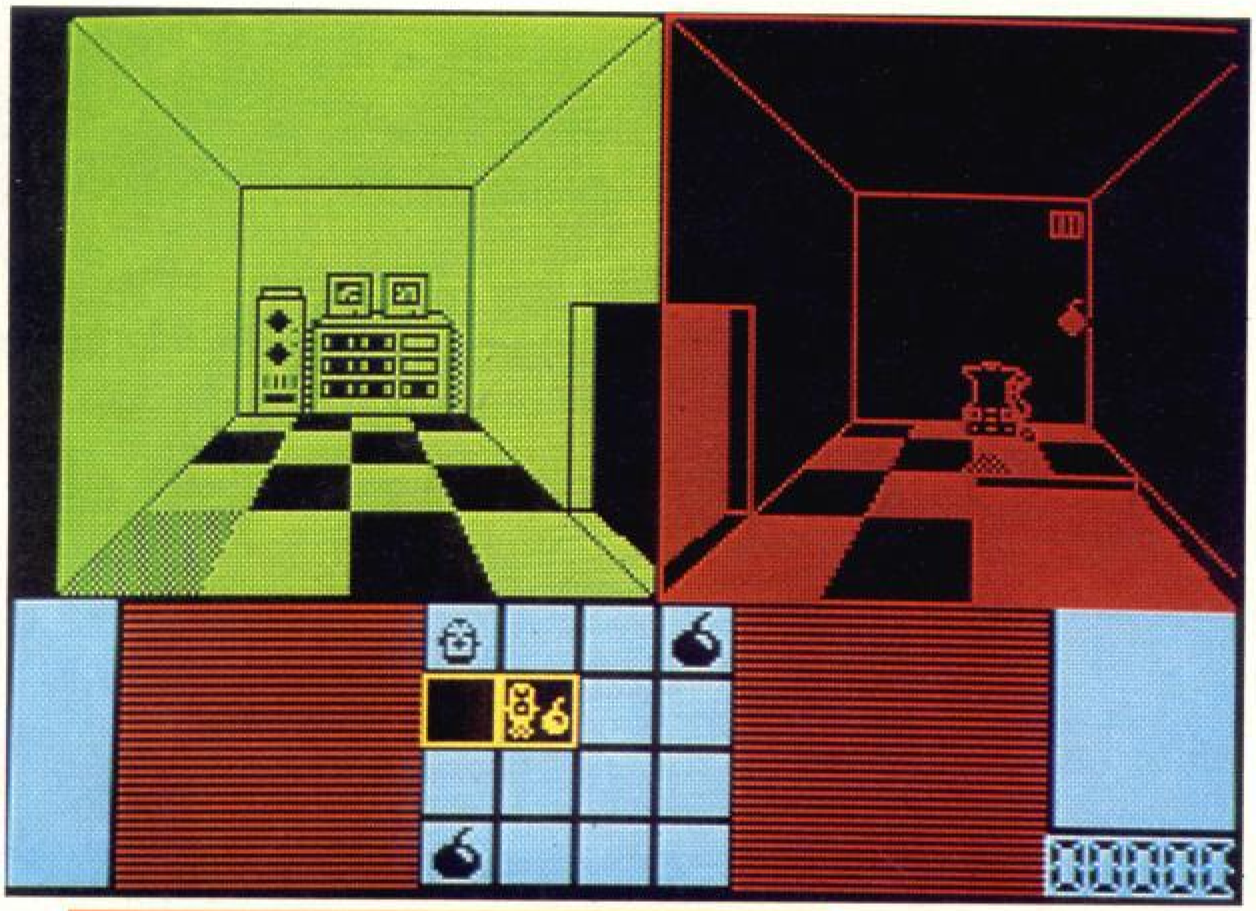
The bomb's about to blow its top. Quick, throw it out the exit!

CRITICISM

●" No way can this be described as an easy game. Even the first level takes a lot of getting used to but, as long as you can master that, you'll really get into it. Some of the problems are neat and totally mindblowing on the later levels, with the rooms at all angles, and some dark. The icon driven system can be another sticking point, but at least it means a complicated game can be controlled from a joystick. The graphics are well drawn, and there are some jolly visual effects like the bombs going off. It's rare to see a strategy game with so much care taken over presentation. "

●" Games like this have never really appealed to me as they involve too much brain and pencil work. Graphically, Deactivators *is unique — I have never seen a game quite like it be. The droids are detailed and well animated and the rooms are drawn in neat perspective. The sound is disappointing; there are no tunes and the effects are limp. The game is very difficult to play even on the first level, though if you do persevere it gets very rewarding when you finish a building. Very playable if you stick with it. "*

●" Now and again it's nice to see a game that does not involve shooting things. *Deactivators* is something of a strategy game as you must plan all your moves perfectly beforehand. Just one slip could have explosive consequences! The graphics are simple and uncomplicated as is the game play, although lobbing the bombs around does take a little practice. The explosions are well done, with the screen shaking violently, but unfortunately the room in which the explosion take place is totally devastated, making it practically impossible to complete that level. An ingenious game - and a welcome change. "

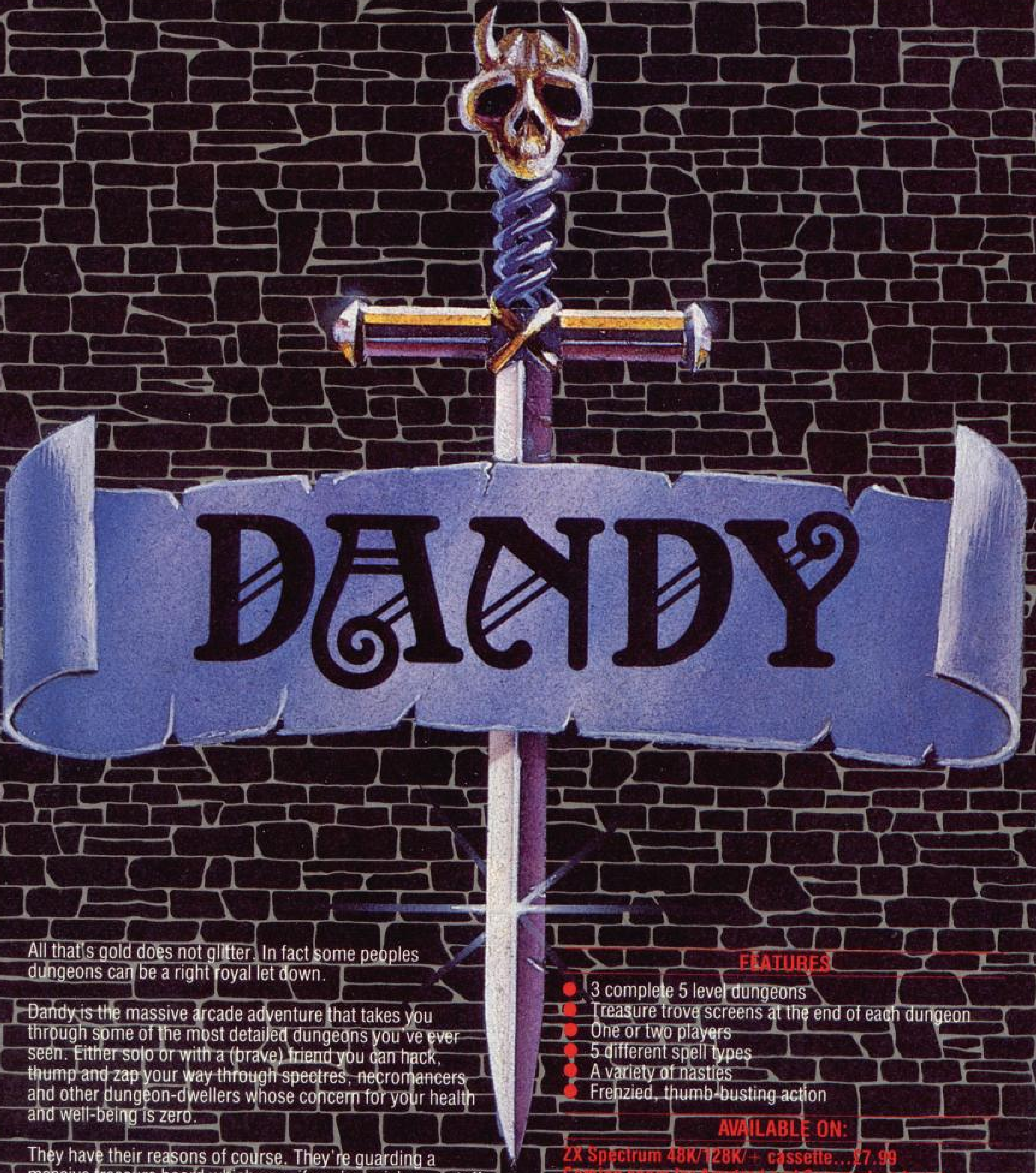


Caught with a bomb by a baddie. The room on the right explodes . . .

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: effective
Use of colour: limited
Graphics: *good perspective effects*
Sound: *tune on the 128, the odd beep on the 48K*
Skill levels: *two*
Screens: *160*
General rating: *An impressive blend of strategy and arcade*

Use of computer	86%
Graphics	88%
Playability	79%
Getting started	69%
Addictive qualities	80%
Value for money	78%
Overall	85%



All that's gold does not glitter. In fact some peoples dungeons can be a right royal let down.

Dandy is the massive arcade adventure that takes you through some of the most detailed dungeons you've ever seen. Either solo or with a (brave) friend you can hack, thump and zap your way through spectres, necromancers and other dungeon-dwellers whose concern for your health and well-being is zero.

They have their reasons of course. They're guarding a massive treasure hoard which you, if you're quick, can stuff into your amazingly capacious swag bag.

Dandy is the ultimate dungeon. Enter at your peril!

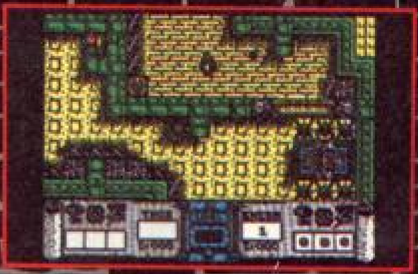
FEATURES

- 3 complete 5 level dungeons
- Treasure trove screens at the end of each dungeon
- One or two players
- 5 different spell types
- A variety of nasties
- Frenzied, thumb-busting action

AVAILABLE ON:

ZX Spectrum 48K/128K/+ cassette...£7.99
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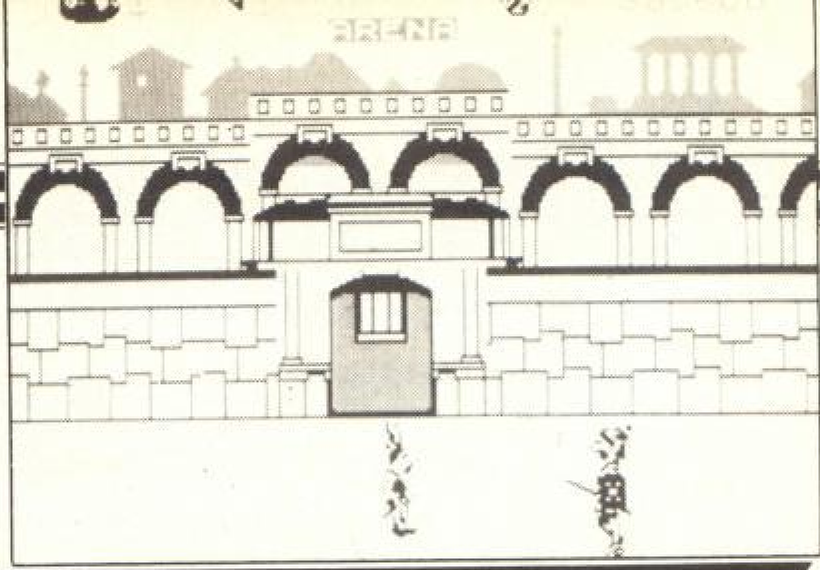


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ASTERIX AND THE MAGIC CAULDRON



In the Roman arena with a bit of cauldron in the inventory but no potion. Asterix is down to his last life. . . .

Producer: Melbourne House
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **William Tang, Andrew Pierson, Frank Oldham**

Back in 50 BC much of Gaul is under Roman rule except one village where Asterix and Obelix live. Asterix, made famous in cartoon strips and books, is the cunning fighter always confronting impossible situations, helped by his eternally hungry and rotund friend, Obelix.

The people of Asterix's village are not fighters but they do have magic on their side. Getafix, the wise village Druid, developed a mystical herbal recipe which, when drunk, gives the drinker powerful super-human strengths.

When Obelix was a baby he fell into Getafix's cauldron and virtually overdosed on the elixir. The effects never worked off and sometimes he forgets his mighty strength. Naughty Obelix tries to get a top up during a brewing session, but Getafix sternly turns him away. Obelix is not amused and aims a gentle kick at the cauldron — it shatters into seven pieces that scatter throughout Gaul. Vitalstatistix, the chief of the tribe, is not amused. Asterix and Obelix offer to hunt for the pieces so the elixir can be brewed again to save the village from the marauding Romans.

There are fifty screens in the game depicting scenes from the village, the surrounding countryside, and the Roman encampments. Obelix will follow Asterix anywhere but there are limits and he has to be bribed with his favourite food: wild boar hams. Asterix starts his journey with five of these hams and one disappears each time Asterix and Obelix feel a little peckish. If the stock gets too low then Asterix has to fight a boar — the fight sequences in the game take place in windows that zoom out of the main playscreen. Stamina bars for each combatant appear on the side of the window and the winner is the one who biff the other into submission first. Defeating the boar turns it into a baked ham that is added to the scoff chart. If Asterix loses a fight, the boar kicks him out of the window and he loses a life. The window system is also used when fighting with the Roman soldiers and when Asterix picks up useful objects along the way.

Asterix starts with five lives and a phial of the elixir which was salvaged from the broken cauldron. This can only be used once in the game in time of extreme trouble.



Asterix and Obelix admire the scenery in the Gaulish village. The status area reveals four hams in stock. They haven't used the potion yet . . .

The pieces of the cauldron are shown at the top of the screen when they have been pocketed. Keys can also be picked up to get Asterix and Obelix into previously unexplored areas of the game.

CRITICISM

● **" When I was small I used to read the books, and they still raise a few laughs. So does the game, but in an entirely different sense: probably in that I looked forward to reading the books, but I certainly would avoid playing the game if I possibly could. The graphics and the loading screen are very pretty, but the game, as far as playability is concerned, is just amazingly bug ridden. In the course of playing Asterix I had to reload it no less than six times. If I had been unfortunate enough to buy this, I would be well cheesed off by now, but thank heaven I'll probably never have to play it again. Very pretty, but not much fun. "**

● *" Asterix is a strange sort of game that contains its good bits and its fair share of bad bits. The game consists of some excellent graphics that are very big and extremely well drawn. Colour is well used and the game avoids clashes with the use of big black outlines on all of the buildings — basic but effective. The sound in the game is practically non-existent, but the game doesn't suffer too much without it. All the characters are very recognisable and fun to walk around with — which adds to the whole image of the game. I like the way the windows open when Asterix gets into trouble. Even though all these good bits may attract you to the game, I must warn you that the game contains little for the game player to do bar wander round and have the odd scrap. "*

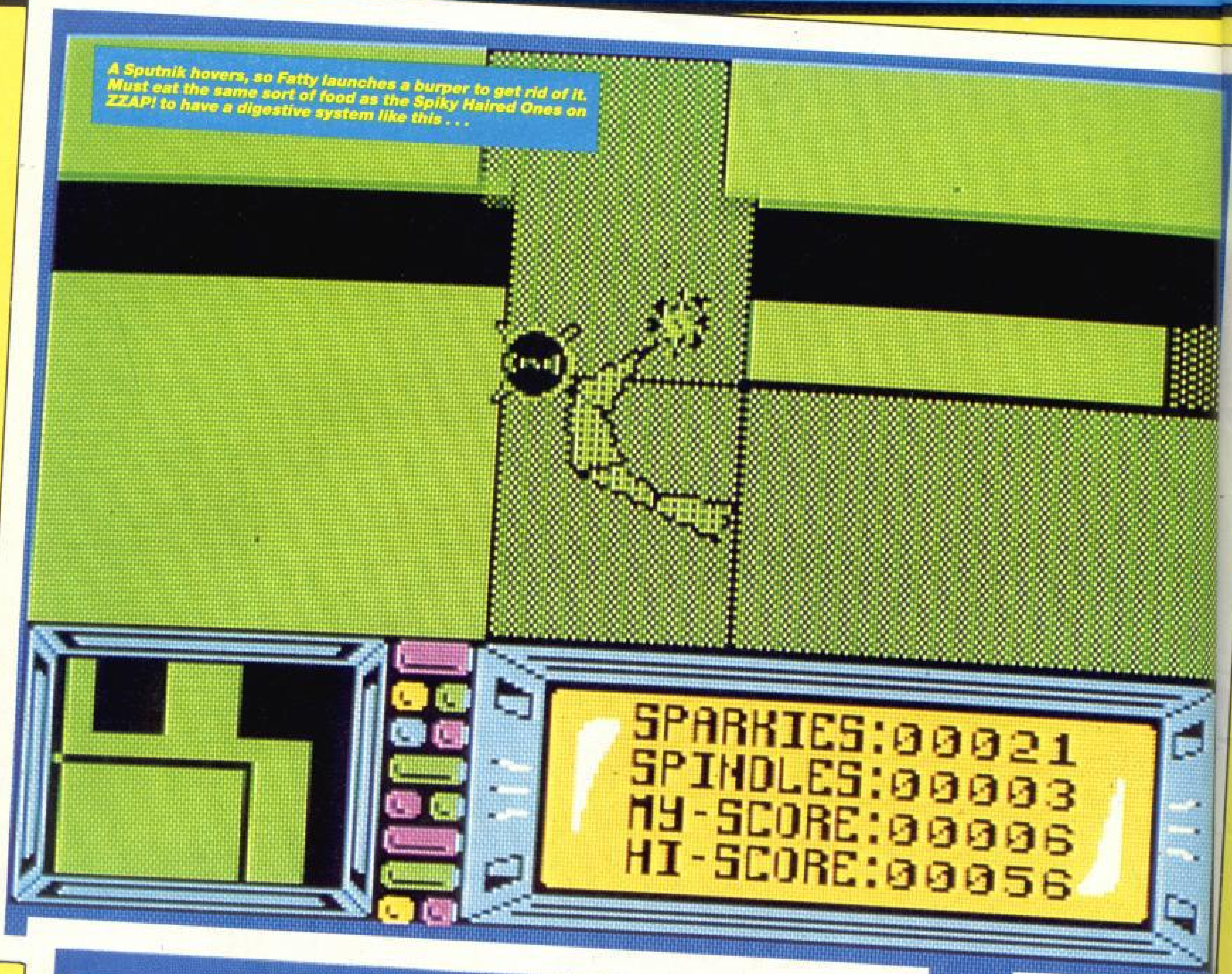
● " Come on guys I've been waiting for this game for ages and when it finally arrives it's awful. I expected better of MELBOURNE HOUSE. I was very surprised at the unprofessional way this game had been presented and at the general 'unfinishedness' of it — it seems that *Asterix* has just been thrown together to meet a deadline. The graphics are about the only thing that *Asterix* can boast about — the characters are well detailed and nicely animated and the playing area is colourful and full of detail. The sound is a little on the poor side: there are no tunes and the effects are minimal. The most annoying bit is the way you can get stuck in a tree or wedged between Obelix and a building, fortunately there is a game abort option but it does get very frustrating if you have to abort a game when you have five pieces. "

COMMENTS

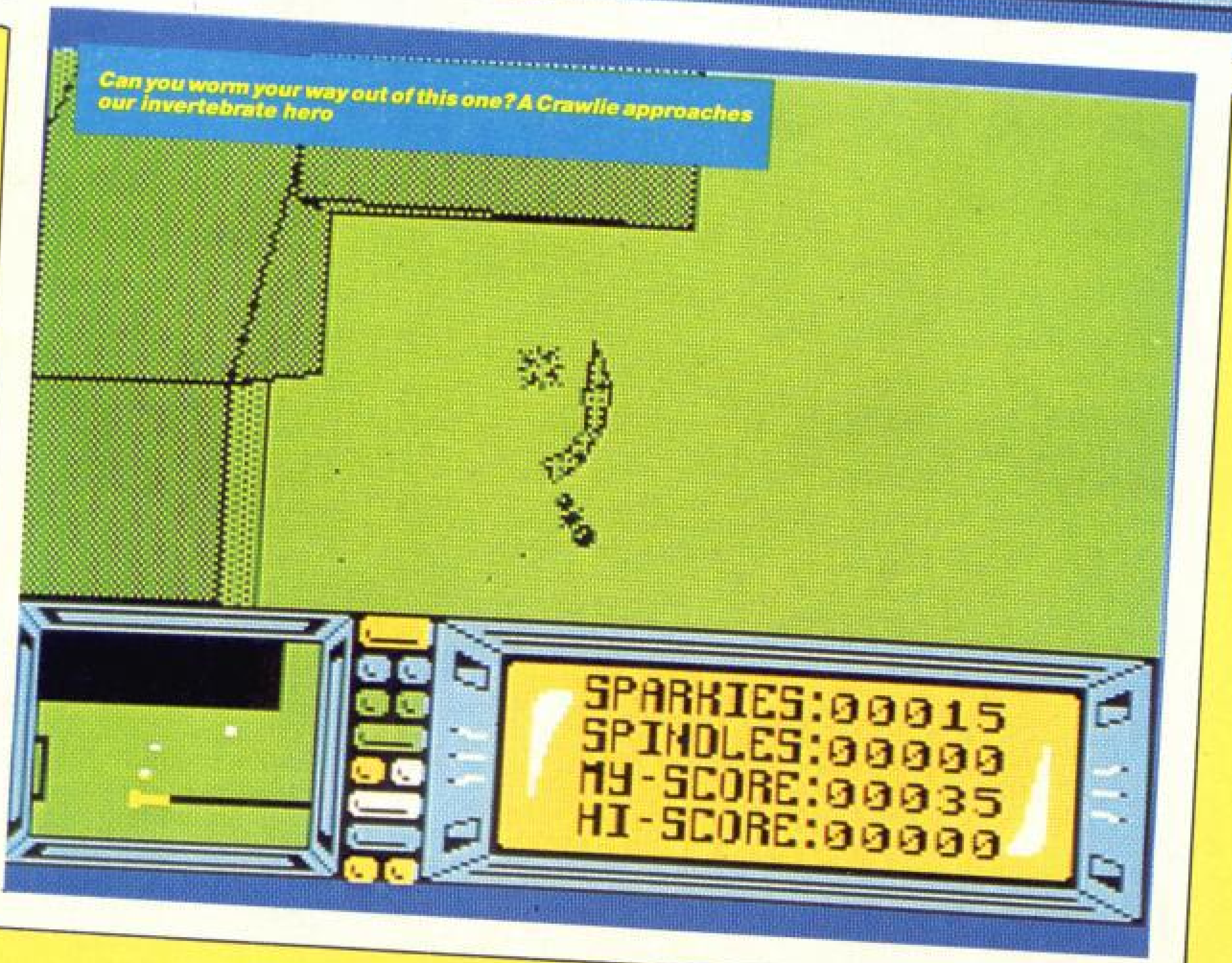
Control keys: Q up, Z down, I left, P right, SPACE fire
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: very bold and pretty, without clashes
Graphics: nice and large, attractive scenery
Sound: none
Skill levels: one
Screens: fifty
General rating: A great disappointment: a good looker but the gameplay could do with a bit of Getafix's potion!

Use of computer	61%
Graphics	84%
Playability	60%
Getting started	70%
Addictive qualities	59%
Value for money	56%
Overall	**61%**

F·A·T W·O·R·M B·L·O·W·S



A Sputnik hovers, so Fatty launches a burper to get rid of it. Must eat the same sort of food as the Spiky Haired Ones on ZZAP! to have a digestive system like this . . .

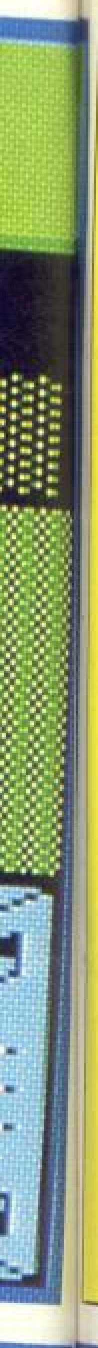


Can you worm your way out of this one? A Crawlie approaches our invertebrate hero



WS A S·P·A·R·K·Y

A CRASH Smash



Let's face it, just about the dumbest habitat for your average worm is the inside of a Spectrum. But, things being the way they are in computer games, that's exactly where this particular worm resides.

Ol' Fatty, the world's most dense worm, has clearly hit upon the theory that this is the place where he is least likely to be hassled by blackbirds, robins and the like.

Just as he is settling down to the easy life, he suddenly realises that things aren't so wonderful after all. Contrary to popular opinion, the inside of the average Spectrum is absolutely crawling with life. Creeper bugs buzz around in Sputniks, swooping low over the main PCB. The Sputniks, if not dealt with, transform into Crawlies which try to attach themselves to Fatty. Just to add to the problems, termite-like Crawlies sometimes erupt from the surface of the PCB and chase him around.

Fatty's eventual aim in life is the very natural urge to pass on his genes to another generation. Considering the limited intelligence he has displayed up to date, this seems a thoroughly dubious goal. To reproduce, Fatty needs to collect 50 spindles lying around on the PCB. Then he's got to find the disk drive, get all his data copied and clone himself.

The microscopic world of Fatty is a world of bewildering height and depth. What might seem a sliver of silver conductor to you or me is an insurmountable obstacle to him. To get around, he has to be carefully steered up convenient ramps and slid along data buses suspended at dizzying heights above the PCB. All the various bits and blocks scattered around the place are given true perspective, so that, when they are at the centre of the screen, they appear flat. As Fatty moves, and the object approaches the edge of the screen, the sides of the object come into view giving an impression of height not unlike flying over a Lilliputian version of New York.

Fatty's fate is sealed if he picks up more than four Crawlies, but there are handy debuggers scattered around, and by crawling into them, he can shed any Crawlies picked up. He can also fight back against the Crawlies by using blaster sparkies fired horizontally straight from the nose, and by laying burper sparkies which wait until a Sputnik is flying overhead and then rise up to eliminate it. Very high-flying Sputniks are, unfortunately, immune. Burpers are also useful for changing direction, and can take out any Crawlies which happen to bump into them.

Extra sparkies are awarded for picking up spindles, and can also be picked up when zipping along the thin data buses. Furthermore, misfired burper sparkies which end up lying on the PCB can be consumed and regurgitated later. Mapping is an essential feature to find Fatty's way around the immense circuit, and to help, the game has a small insert map showing some of the nearby obstacles, spindles, and a rough indication of Fatty's present position.

Fat Worm Blows a Sparky originally started life as *Killer DOS*, a mucho macho serious simulation of software worms invading computer systems, cloning themselves and corrupting all the disks. But DURELL decided that it was all getting slightly silly, and instead chose to release a game which had absolutely no relevance to anything whatsoever. And thus was Fatty created.

CRITICISM

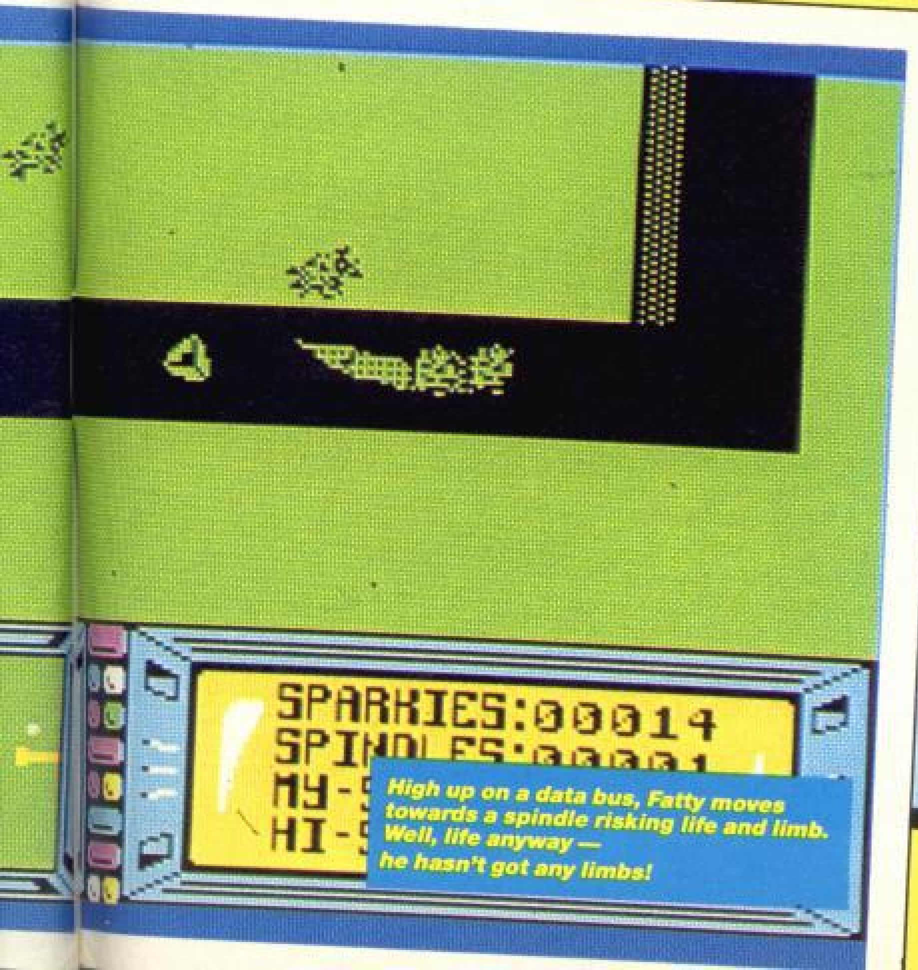
" Wow! This game has got graphics which look so amazing that I don't think I can comment on them fairly. The title is unusual, if nothing else, but hardly prepares you for the stunning originality of the game. Playability and addictiveness are of the highest standard, but as for the graphics — well, what can I say? As far as animation and solid 3D goes, this is probably the best I have ever seen, though the colour accolade must still go to Lightforce. **Now, if DURELL teamed up with FTL, I would probably be reduced to a moaning, speechless moron. But then, what's new?! "**

CRITICISM

" Not exactly a run-of-the-mill title for a computer game but then this isn't really a run-of-the-mill game. Stomping around the inside of a computer has been done many times before but DURELL has certainly done it well, and differently. Fat Worm, **graphically, is as revolutionary as** 3D Ant Attack **was in its day; the 3D effect is ASTOUNDING. The only thing that spoils the graphics for me is the use of colour. After a while the bright green really does affect your eyes, though you can always turn down the colour control on your TV. Soundwise I have no grumbles — there are many effects during the game and a really good tune on the title screen. Controlling your Fat Worm is a mite difficult but given a little practice you will soon be turning on a sixpence. It isn't often that I feel that I have to add a new game to my relatively small collection, but this one's a must. Go and buy it now, your life will be incomplete without it! "**

CRITICISM

" So the worm turns. Not only that, he writhes and wriggles. You just won't believe the sort of graphics in this game. The perspective and sense of height are so realistic I got vertigo! Not just content with awesome graphics, the game play is terrific. Trying to steer the worm around with the Sputniks buzzing overhead, and all the time keeping in mind where you're going, is some game. It's so good to see something this original. It's just like nothing else. This is going to set a new standard for solid 3D. "



High up on a data bus, Fatty moves towards a spindle risking life and limb. Well, life anyway — he hasn't got any limbs!

Producer: Durell
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Julian Todd**

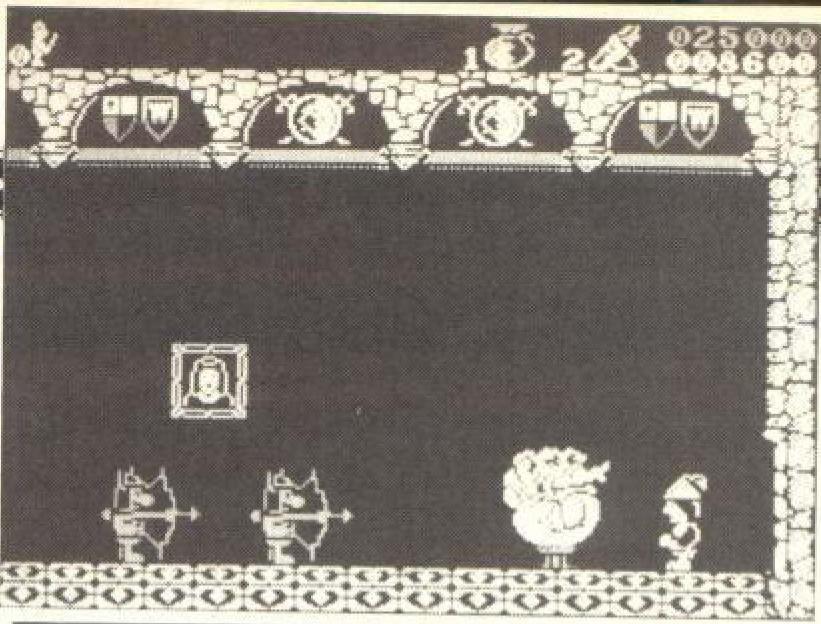
COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: mostly shades of green
Graphics: innovative 3D — Remarkable
Sound: workmanlike
Skill levels: one
Screens: huge scrolling area
General rating: extremely silly, and wonderful fun

Use of computer	96%
Graphics	97%
Playability	93%
Getting started	82%
Addictive qualities	94%
Value for money	89%
Overall	95%

CONQUESTADOR

Producer: Melbourne House
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Javier Cano, Emilio Martinez, Jose Manuel Munoz**



Better than having an elephant's foot — why not have a whole elephant as an ornament. Squaring up to a couple of archers in CONQUESTADOR

Back in the days when life was cheap and baddies were numerous, Battle Hero Redhan faced an awesome task: he volunteered to rescue Taleria from the hands of his deadliest enemies. His quest will take him deep through the dark lands into territory unfamiliar to him, and his power will be challenged by many evil beings: Glauring the fire dragon, Kulwoor the magician's Lord, and Zwolhan the Lord of the Circle of the Blazing Spheres.

In order to release Taleria, Redhan must find three 'star stones', concealed in three of the many chests scattered throughout this strange land. The chests are opened automatically when Redhan walks into them and release a mystical swirling vapour. Extra lives or a new arsenal of arrows might be added to Redhan's inventory of objects, but some of the chests release strange demons or cast wicked curses which change Redhan's physical shape for a short while. Redhan never knows what lies hidden in the chests, until he walks into them. And it's too much of a gamble not to open the chests, because they might just contain one of the precious 'star stones'.

Redhan may look pretty diminutive as he embarks on his mission, but he does have a few weapons to help him out. Six arrows rest in his quiver and can be shot at the guardians if they get too close. Redhan can also perform a superhigh jump or a running long jump — very handy for bridging any perilous gaps.

The guardians manifest themselves in various forms, such as master archers, manic lancers, and knights wielding huge swords, and all of them can be killed by shooting at or stomping on them — if Redhan jumps from a reasonable height onto a character's head, then they disappear in a puff of white smoke.

On the lower levels of the mountain citadel, an even greater threat is encountered . . . huge tarantulas scuttle along the ground at a faster pace than Redhan, and must be destroyed as quickly as possible. Some of the spiders are more advanced than others and hurl burning fire balls in Redhan's direction. If Redhan doesn't leap out of the way in time, he is burnt to a cinder.

To make the going a little easier there are several teleports scattered throughout the citadel. These look ominous as they consist of a huge mouth lined with very nasty teeth, but if Redhan walks into one, he is magically transported to another part of the mystical citadel to face yet more perils on the rescue mission.

Our hero approaches an evil looking transporter. Step in, the teeth clamp shut and hey presto! You arrive elsewhere



CRITICISM

● **" Although** Conquestador **isn't one of the worst games I've played, it certainly isn't one of the best. The graphics are reasonable, but the game is only mildly playable and addictive. Letting your man change into an aardvark is an interesting experience, and the game, though lacking an original format, plays differently to a lot of similar-looking games. This is far from one of the best games that MELBOURNE HOUSE has produced; I hope they're not letting their standards slip, because we've yet to see the long awaited** Fist II. **"**

● *" There have been so many arcade adventures like this that it is now hard to say anything nice about a new one. At first sight* Conquestador *looks as though it could be a really good game. Further play reveals that it doesn't go into much depth, so it isn't really much fun to play. There are only a few types of location, so once you have seen them all there isn't anything to spur you on to complete the game. The graphics are very* Underwurlde*sque; large colourful characters and pretty backgrounds. The sound is lacking, but the spot effects are adequate. On the whole I don't recommend this game as it becomes monotonous after a short time. "*

● " MELBOURNE HOUSE seem to have got out of the 'fighting' games rut and have, via ERBE SOFT, almost come up with a good game. The basic look of the game is very similar to all the other arcade adventures of this ilk, eg: *Robot Messiah. Conquestador* strikes me as being very simple to play and it contains very little to keep the player contented for very long. The graphics are large and colourful, but a lot of flicker occurs when two characters pass over each other. This happens often on any one screen, and I found the game very slow and unplayable. *Conquestador* represents nothing new on the software market, and is lacking in many areas. "

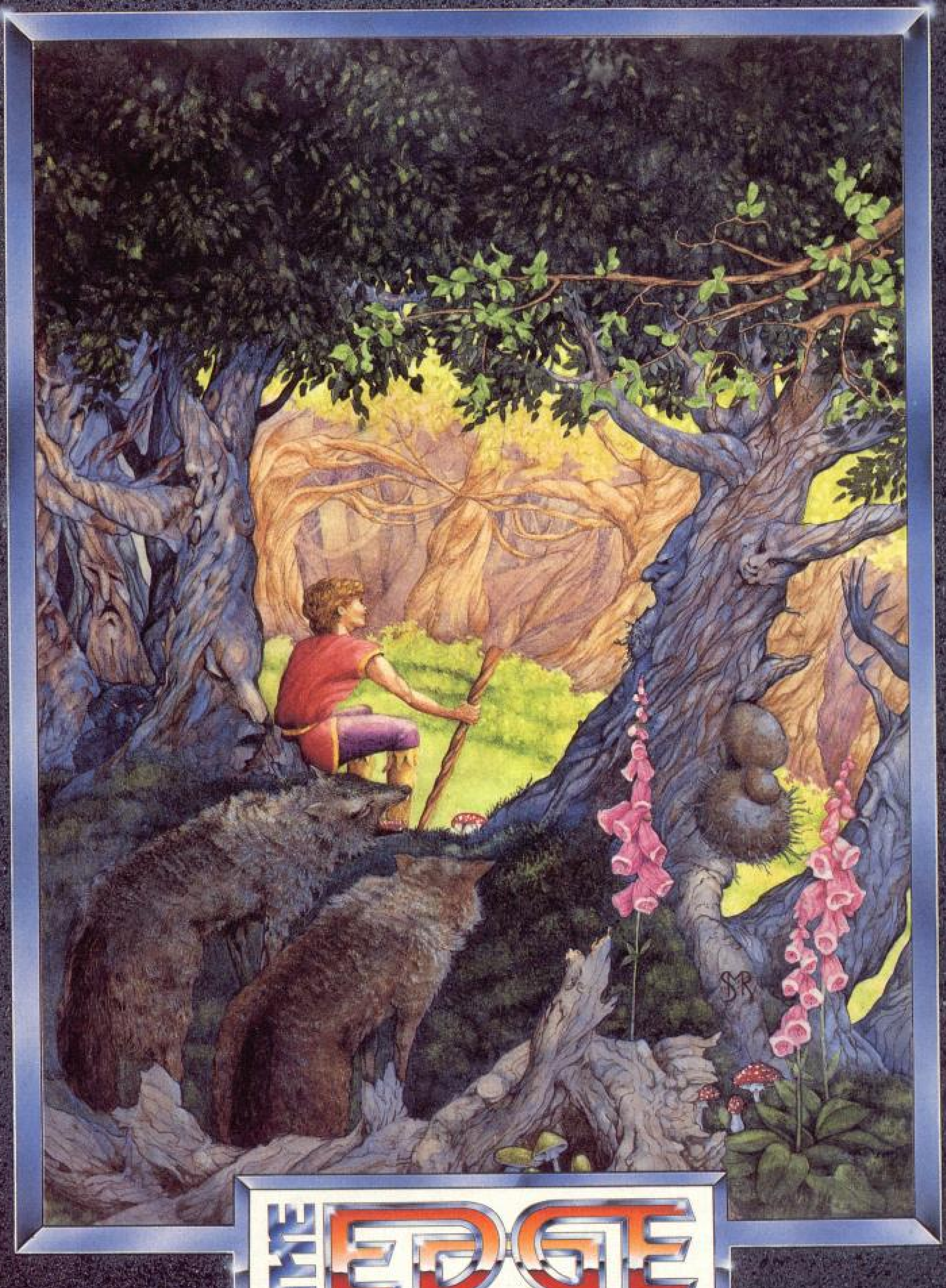
COMMENTS

Control keys: Q high jump, A long jump, O left, P right, M fire, N select
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: pretty
Graphics: cute, some neat animations
Sound: jolly little tunette at the start
Skill levels: one
Screens: around 100
General rating: An competent arcade adventure that adds little to the genre. A cute but empty game

Use of computer	69%
Graphics	70%
Playability	65%
Getting started	66%
Addictive qualities	64%
Value for money	65%
Overall	**65%**

Fairlight

Chronicles of the Land of Fairlight
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GEROUSLY



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THRUST

Producer: Firebird
Retail Price: **£1.99**
Author: **Jeremy Smith.**
Conversion by D Lowe

The Resistance movement is about to launch a huge offensive against a tyrannical Intergalactic Empire.

In preparation for this mammoth and probably suicidal assault, the Resistance has captured several battle-grade starships, only to discover that they are largely useless in war, as they are lacking the necessary Klystron pods which provide power. The catch is that these pods are only to be found on Empire-owned planets.

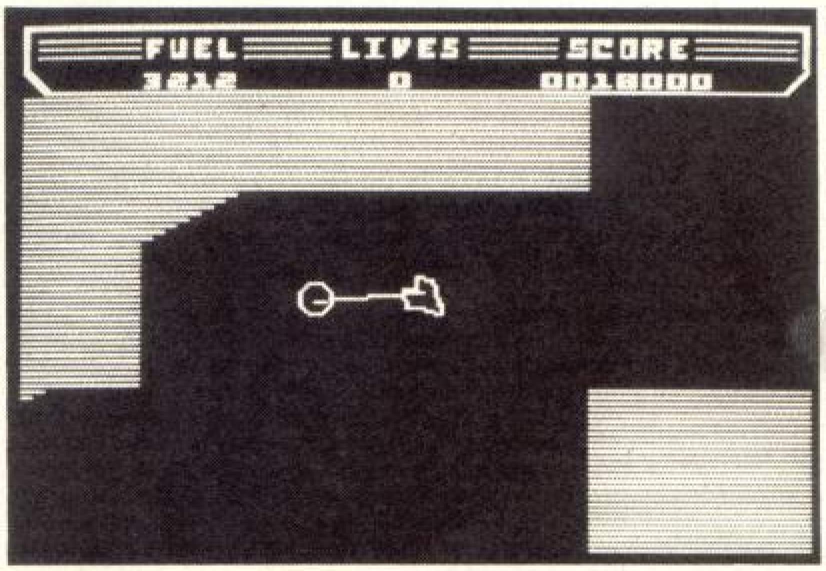
A volunteer must be found to steal enough Klystron pods for the mission to go ahead. As you — yes, sonny, *you* — are one of the most skilled pilots in the Resistance, just guess who the lucky blighter's going to be. Using all your skills, you must fly to each planet in turn and steal a pod, then drag it out of orbit to where it can be picked up by the Resistance

Each planet is defended by a battery of limpet guns which are powered by a nuclear plant, and shooting at the plant puts the guns temporarily out of action. The more direct hits scored on the power plant, the longer it takes the limpet guns to recharge. But if too many shots are rained down upon the plant it becomes unstable, and you then have a mere ten seconds in which to grab a pod and pull back before the entire planet self-destructs. If you've got away with the pod, then destroying the planet picks up a sizeable reward. Failure to retrieve the pod results in instant mission termination.

Your craft possesses only an upwards thrust, and downwards movements are controlled by gravity. You must constantly thrust away from the planet's powerful gravitational field which drags your craft towards the ground and ultimate destruction.

After each pod has been safely captured you automatically proceed to the next planet, each having its own peculiar characteristics. You will have to contend with reversed gravity and invisible landscapes before the game loops around and starts all over again.

And so, once more, the fate of the galaxy is in your trembling hands. Good luck, and good pod hunting!

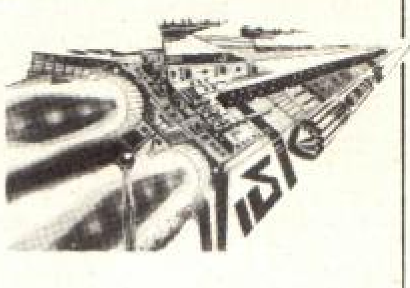


Cameron's just collected the pod doobrie in THRUST — all he's go to do is make his way to the planet's surface

CRITICISM

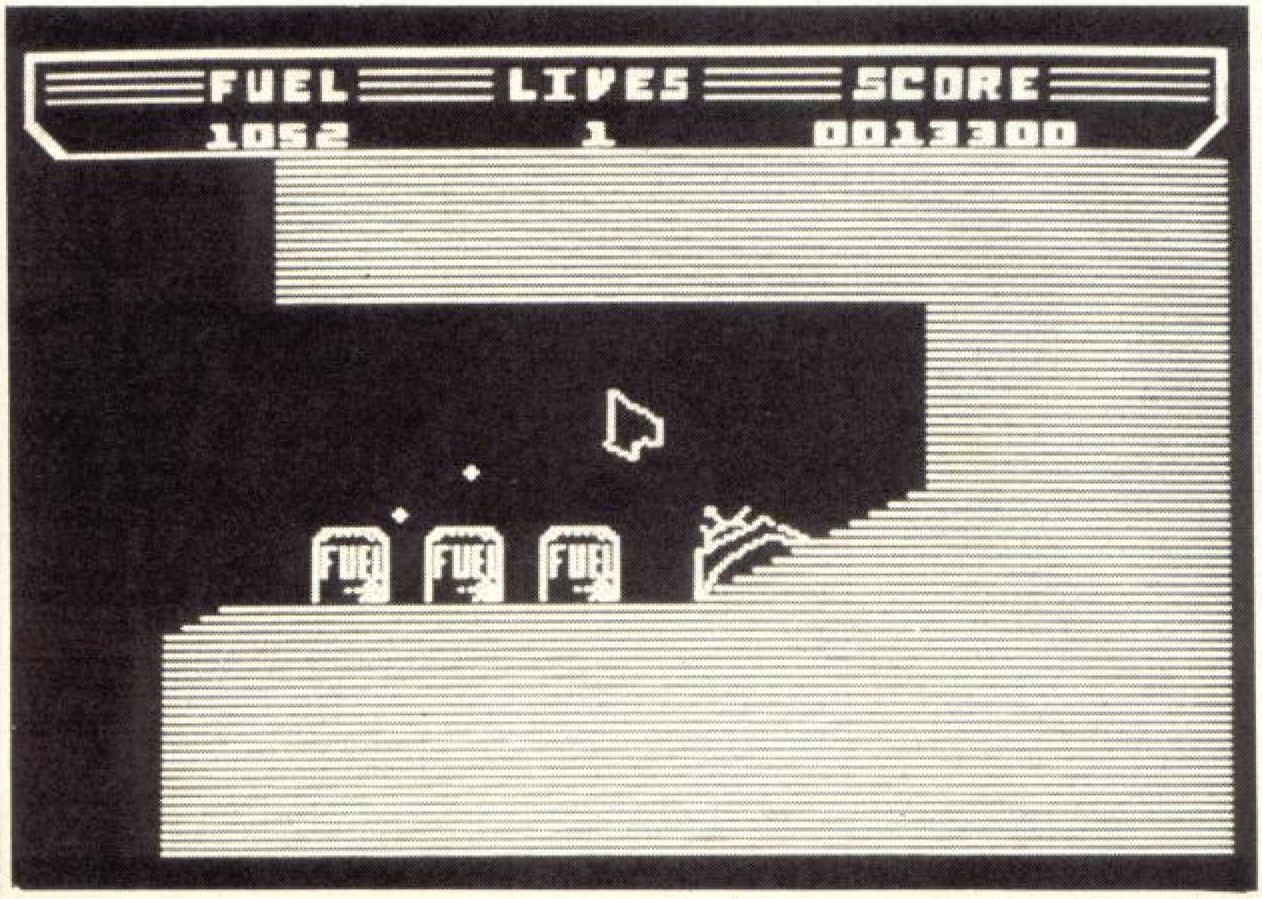
● "**After a lot of sweat and cursing I can honestly say that** Thrust **is the most compelling budget game I've played in months. At first it looks extremely primitive, with vector graphics that resemble the arcade classic** Gravitar, **limited use of colour and a front end that you can only access once. The levels are very hard to master, so remembering the layouts of the caverns is essential if you wish to do well. Controlling your ship is similar to all other** Gravitar **variants and takes a bit of getting used to and an awful lot of practice. I strongly recommend this one as a very good game at a very silly price!**"

● "*I would have thought that the Spectrum would have been the perfect computer for* Thrust*; surely the programmers would be able to give it lots of speed and keep it one of the most playable games around. Unfortunately, as with most conversions, it has lost some of its sparkle in the transition from 6502 to Z80. There's no doubt that* Thrust *is fast — too fast at times — but it seems to have been poorly programmed. The borders for scrolling are all in the wrong place, and it fails to scroll sufficiently — which results in a very jerky screen when travelling at speed. The game lacks the sound that the original had and instead just replaces it with a stupid flashing border every time you hit anything.* Thrust *has lost most of the appeal of the original, and you're left with only the basics of the game.*"



● "This was an extremely playable game on other machines. The Spectrum version is, to me, just as good. Unfortunately, as is so often the case, the sound has lost out on the conversion, but otherwise, *Thrust* is still very good value for money. The scrolling is poor, and the graphics are tiny, but, credit where it's due, FIREBIRD has a very playable game in *Thrust*. I like it a lot."

Cam's getting dangerously close to that defence emplacement. Mind you, he's near the fuel dumps . . .



COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable
Joystick: keyboard only
Keyboard play: sensitive
Use of colour: economical
Graphics: archaic but adequate
Sound: spot FX
Skill levels: one
Screens: 24
General rating: not a totally successful conversion, but good fun all the same

Use of computer	75%
Graphics	60%
Playability	76%
Getting started	77%
Addictive qualities	79%
Value for money	86%
Overall	**76%**

TRAILBLAZER

Producer: Gremlin Graphics
Retail Price: **£7.95**

Hurtling through space, bouncy ball, hero of GREMLIN's latest game, has to blaze a trail that others may follow.

The trouble is, the trail through space has rather strange properties. Instead of being a nice flat road old Mr Bouncy can just steam down, it's a bit full of holes. It's a bit like the 'Yellow Brick Road' with the Shropshire District Council doing the one-way system, full of holes, bumps and all sorts of hideous hazards

Before Bouncy's work is done, he's got fourteen different courses to blaze a trail down, so he's really got his work cut out. Each course has to be done in around forty seconds, so no slacking or back sliding!

For trainee bouncies, there's a practice mode which allows the player to practise any three courses in an attempt to get the course time down. In practice mode, the time limit is 100 seconds, but, if you fancy your chances in the main game, it's got to be around 40 seconds.

the controls are simple, forward to accelerate, back to brake, left and right to move from side to side on the belt.

straight over them. Diagonally striped squares speed you up. Not much of a problem here, you are normally going flat out to make the time limit anyway. Next in awfulness comes the solid white squares. These jump you in to space. At full lick, this will catapult ol' bouncy forward just over three segments.

Then comes the real nasty ones. The horizontally lined segements have roughly the same effect as bouncy hitting a treacle-filled lake, they kind of stick to you. Only a lot of heaving forward on the joystick will get you through these ones. Then there are the spotty squares. These totally freak poor little bouncy out by reversing the left and right controls. This unfortunate state of affairs is only corrected by steaming over another spotty bit.

Then of course there are the black segments, like there's no ground man, some cat's taken the ground away. Old bouncy ends up falling down quite a few of these.

After crashing, he gets thrown back on the belt, but without momentum, a situation leading to further disasters on the gaping bits. Once the rhythm's gone, old bouncy's in for a hard time, and the clock is still ticking away. On average, every crash costs about two seconds of precious trailblazing time.



Blazing a trail through the cosmos. Solid squares give you that extra bounce

The course is like an out of control flattened escalator like those ones that never work at Heathrow — it's thundering down the screen towards you, and you are trying to leg it up the other way. But this is no ordinary escalator. For a start it's suspended in space, and there are bits missing. On some screens, there's more missing than there are bits! The belt is five segments wide and comes in a variety of shades. Shaded squares are easy to handle you just roll

To help on each course, the player gets four extra bounces (hit fire). This allows some of the really nasty bits to be avoided, or if the player forgets the course, and suddenly finds himself heading towards a yawning abyss, it comes in handy. The main use of the extra bounces is to get over the horizontally lined bits, or as a shortcut round a zig-zag. As these cost time, up to five seconds, it's almost preferable to crash! But the best method is to press fire just



Things are getting difficult — look out for that nasty patch ahead: it'll slow you down!

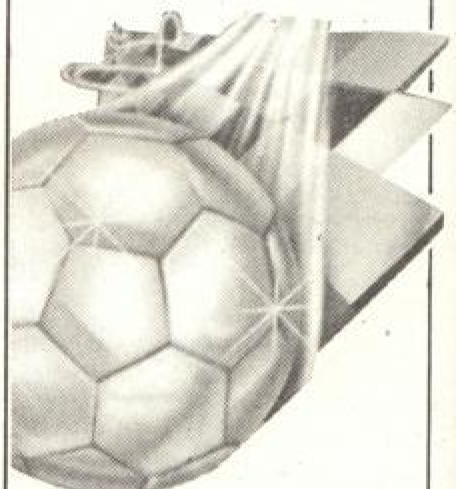
before hitting them and go sailing straight over.

CRITICISM

● **" I must be the only person in the office not to have played this on either the Amstrad or the Commodore so it took me a long while to really enjoy playing it. I'm a little surprised that there wasn't a really involved scenario on the inlay as the game really does lend itself to one. The graphics are very very fast, and well defined too. Colour is a little suspect on some screens but you can always turn down the colour on your TV if things get too garish. The sound is a bit disappointing as the tune is primitive and the effects aren't really up to much. Once you become competent at** Trail Blazer **it's quite hard to leave it alone as it is extremely playable and addictive. "**

● *" I was quite surprised at this game coming onto the Spectrum because I couldn't imagine it without all the colour, which plays an integral part in other versions.* GREMLIN *seem to have come up with an effective compromise, using excellent shading, which makes up for the defficiency quite well. The tune on the title screen is pretty ancient stuff, but the game, as in the original, plays superbly, and that's the major point in its favour. I think* Trailblazer *is a very good conversion, and one that's well getting if it's playability you want and not graphics. "*

● " This is obviously a game that doesn't rest easily on the Spectrum without the colour that played such an important part in the other versions. The shading works okay, but I think it affects the gameplay — it's far easier to see the colour of a square rapidly scrolling towards you than it is to see shading. Despite all that, it's a fast, addictive *original* game that'll soon have you hooked. The practice mode is a real plus and means you can seriously concentrate on the screens giving you trouble. "



COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/W left/right; P/L increase/decrease speed; SPACE to jump

Joystick: Sinclair and Kempston
Keyboard play: responsive, and just as well!
Use of colour: rather garish
Graphics: simple looking but very fast
Sound: poor
Skill levels: your own against the clock, with progressively difficult screens
Screens: scrolling
General rating: original, fast and addictive.

Use of computer	85%
Graphics	81%
Playability	86%
Getting started	83%
Addictive qualities	89%
Value for money	87%
Overall	88%

DRAGON'S LAIR

Producer: Software Projects
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Paul Hodgson and Andy Walker**

Remember the first interactive video machine from the arcades? Well, here's the game, adapted for the Spectrum.

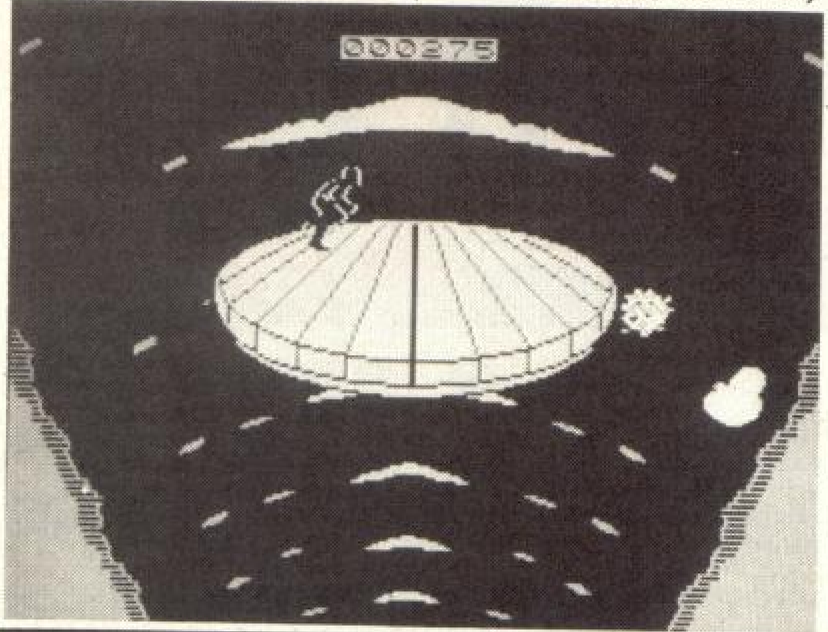
Singe, the dragon with bad breath, has been a naughty boy again. He wants a piece of the action in good King Aethelred's patch — in fact he wants the whole pie. Naturally the king, and all his subjects over whom he rules with peace and enlightenment, are not too keen on big old Bad Breath moving in. but Dragon's aren't brought up to understand the word 'no': their mummies always spoil them. And so they develop antisocial habits, like making off with the king's daughter should anyone annoy them.

Singe has picked a bad place for a fight, for the King's daughter happens to be betrothed to the local macho dimbo, Dirk the Daring. Dirk, the King's champion, is always dashing around doing valiant things. Now whilst you or I might just nip down the 'local,' on hearing the news that your other half is about to become a late night dragon snack, old Dirk straps on his sword and trudges off to Singe's lair to do battle with the horrors that await him.

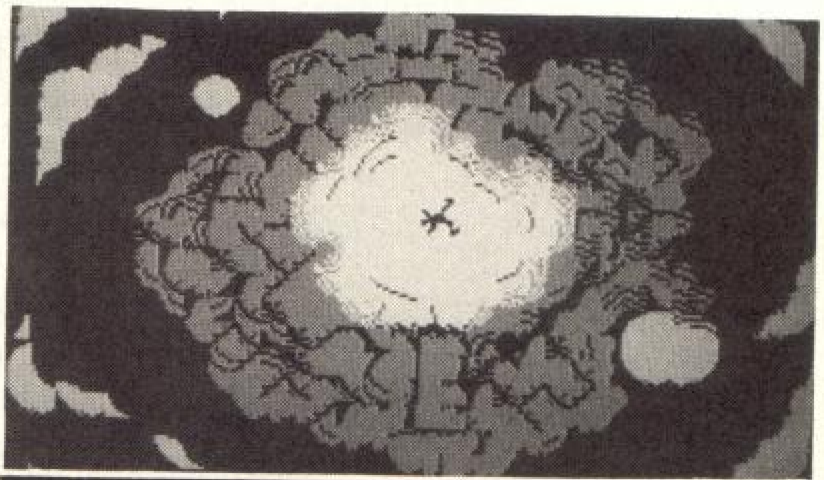
There are nine screens to the game, and each has to be loaded from cassette in turn — an Opus drive version is also available for a little extra money. If you run out of lives, then the tape has to be rewound and things start back on level one. Each level takes about 30 seconds to load from tape.

Section one features Dirk descending into the dank depths on a falling disk. Singe's Air Genies try to blow Dirk off so he plunges to his doom. Dirk must quickly react to which direction the Genie is blowing from and run into the wind.

Next comes the hallway. Timing is everything here, dainty footwork and nifty swordplay are the only way to avoid the bats and the clutching hands.



Dirk the Daring dances on an plumetting platform while the bad guy tries to blow him away, literally



Oh dear. Dirk's done it now. Falling off the edge of his platform, he does the plumetting this time!

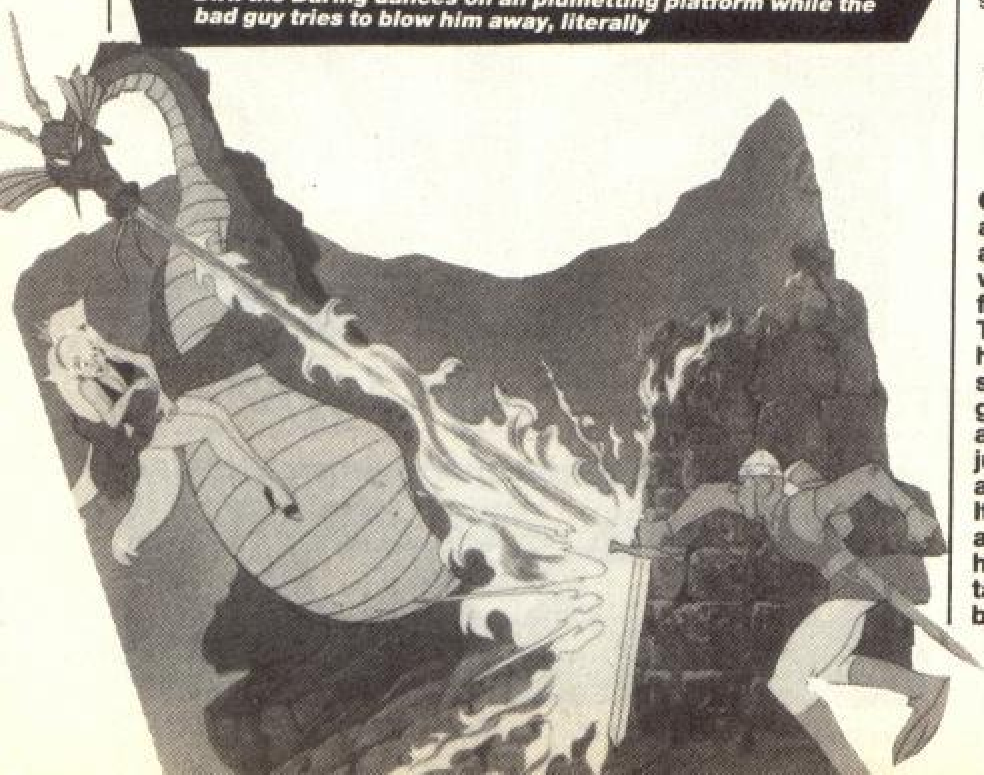
Next come the flaming ropes. Leaping from platform to rope to rope, timing the jumps to catch the ropes. But speed is a must or the ropes burn away before Dirk has done his stuff. Then comes the weapons room. Again it's a question of well timed moves. After this comes the attack of the Giddy Goons. An extra key has to come in to play, as Dirk needs to jump from step to step and despatch the Goons at the same time.

Next comes the tentacle room where some of Singe's early mistakes in meanie making still hang out. Once again, timing is the key. The right move has to be made at precisely the right time. Then it's falling disk time again. Once more it's a question of reacting to the odd meanie breaking wind.

Now things get really tricky. A battle to the death with Singe's evil Lieutenant, the phantom knight on a checkerboard suspended in space. Each time the knight appears, he turns more of the checkerboard into a deadly trap . . .

After all that, Dirk finally makes it to the Dragon's lair, and then has to dodge from rock to rock, hiding from Singe's flaming breath, while helping himself to the odd bit of treasure he finds. By edging along a thin precipice, Dirk picks up a magic sword and slays the dragon, and frees Princess Daphne.

Or that's the theory . . .



CRITICISM

● **" Well, this is quite a faithful adaptation of the arcade game, and thus suffers from most of its weaknesses — sadly it retains few of the original's strengths. The graphics, whilst good, are hardly video disk quality, but the single screen format of the game means there's very little actual gameplay, most of it is just very accurate positioning and incredibly accurate timing. It is frustrating without being addictive. That, coupled with having to load every screen from tape makes this a game I'll not be coming back to regularly. "**

● *" If you were an avid* Dragon's Lair *player in the arcades then stay well away from this as it bears little resemblance to the original. Having said that, for your first few goes the game looks quite promising. In fact I finished the first level (and what a hard slog it was too!) then I discovered the Multiload which took all the fun out of playing the game. The graphics are on the whole very good — lovely large characters that move around smoothly and some very nice scenery. Soundwise this offers less than many of* MASTERTRONIC *budget titles with only a mere sprinkling of spot effects. I can't really recommend this as I didn't really have any fun playing it. "*

● " Everyone I know, who has played the arcade version of *Dragon's Lair*, has gone 'rave, rave, rave' about it at some time. The Spectrum version, while remaining true to the arcade on lots of counts, still lacks an element of playability, which makes it unaddictive. I suppose the difficulty level is one of the game's prime factors, as a game like this with such a high price tag has to justify that by the length of time spent playing, which, I must confess, in my case, wasn't very long. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: Z left; X right; K up; H down; L draw sword/jump; ENTER to jump when holding sword
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: rather tricky
Use of colour: sparing, but tasteful
Graphics: pretty, with neat animation
Sound: not much
Skill levels: one
Screens: nine
General rating: Pretty, but lacking in gameplay

Use of computer	64%
Graphics	82%
Playability	49%
Getting started	51%
Addictive qualities	47%
Value for money	45%
Overall	**54%**



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PUB GAMES

Producer: Alligata
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Richard Stevenson**

Pub games seem to be dying out in nowadays — fruit machines and pints of extremely fizzy lager seem to be more popular forms of entertainment. But now, courtesy of ALLIGATA, there's the chance to resuscitate some of these age old games in the comfort of your home. This compilation pack is designed to be played by two players, starting from side one and working through all seven games. There's also a practice option to help you get into the swing of things.

The first event is darts, in which both players try to work their way down to zero from either 301 or 501 in the best of three games. Three darts are provided, and a little character on the left of the boards throws with a press of the space bar once you've aligned the dart to your satisfaction, moving up, down, left and right. Just to make things a little bit harder the computer has a spot of the shakes, so perfect timing is necessary to get an accurate shot.

Next, comes bar billiards. This is played with eight balls on a special table with holes in the surface. The object is to score as many points as possible by potting the balls, avoiding penalty mushrooms situated at inconvenient points around the table. There are seven white balls and one red. Each hole has a different points value when a ball falls into it and the red ball doubles that value.

A foul is recorded if you fail to hit a ball or accidentally knock over a white mushroom or if any ball returns over the baulk line. Knocking over the black mushroom reduces your score in the game to zero. You have ten minutes of play after which potted balls are not returned to you.

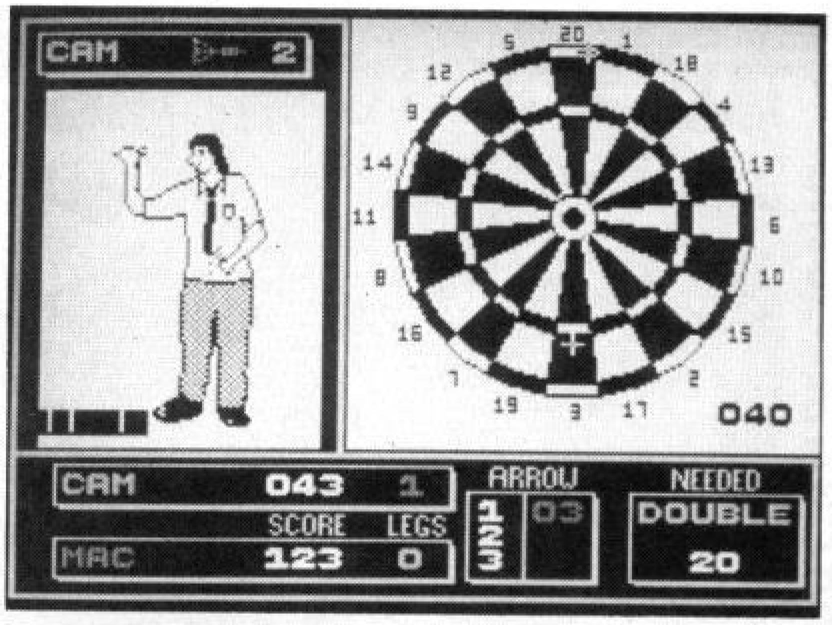
Dominoes is next with both players trying to get rid of all of their dominoes by adding them to the dommies on the 'table' according to the usual rules — best of three games again.

The second side of the cassette contains table football, pontoon and poker. In table football you are presented with a plan view of a football table with the opposing sides represented by their appropriate colours. Just like real table football, the players can be moved from side to side. Pressing the FIRE key kicks the ball. Only nine balls are provided per game, so the first player to score five goals wins.

In Pontoon, the aim is to get a hand of cards with a combined face value of twenty-one, or as close to twenty-one as possible. Starting with two cards which you can twist (have an other card given to you which the other player sees), buy (get another card which only you see) or stick (keep the cards you already have). You can 'burn' an entire hand after the deal — hand it in and get a new set of cards. Ten hands are played, and the overall winner gets to pocket the whole kitty.

After a game of Pontoon what could be better than a spicy game of poker? Keys 1 through to 5 control the five cards dealt and these can be thrown away or kept depending on how good the hand is. Usual poker rules apply, as detailed in the inlay.

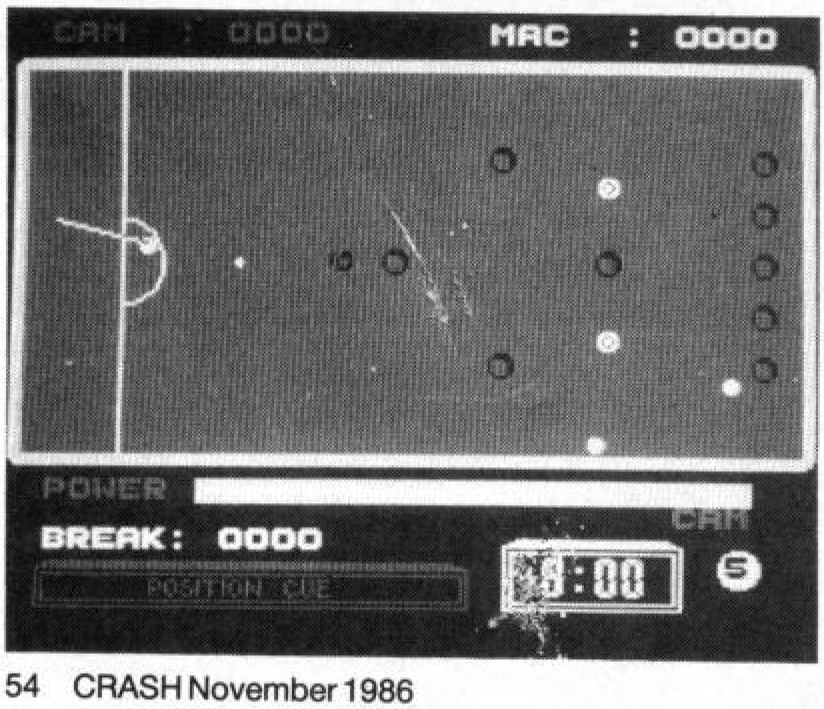
Skittles is the final challenge: after lining up your ball, pressing a key sends it racing down the ally, hopefully resulting in a strike. There are ten bowls per game and five separate games in all.



On the oche, Cam finds he has to play his palindrome in PUB GAMES!



The birds-eye view of the Bar Billiards table — Cam's just started playing his alter-ego Mac by the looks of things



CRITICISM

● **" What a lovely idea this is! Sadly, ALLIGATA seemed to have missed out the most important bit of going down the pub — but they probably ran out of space at the end of the tape! On the whole, this is presented quite well with graphics of a fairly high quality used throughout, a few well placed spot effects, and even the occasional tune. The seven events are quite good fun to play, although I can't really see them keeping me occupied for very long. Generally this isn't a bad set of games for the asking price, but I didn't find them all that compelling. "**

● " Pub Games *is a very good compilation. Each of the games is a very definite individual game, quite different from the rest. I doubt that reviewing them separately, I'd give them all more than 70% apiece. But in the compilation, they all join up to give a real nights entertainment. My only major complaint is that there is no quit option to allow you to leave one game and go onto the next in the full pub run.* Pub Games *has a lot to it, and if you're into the simple, but not too easy sort of games, then this might just be what you're looking for.* "

● " ALLIGATA have really put their minds to this one and come up with a first class simulation. All of the games are very well done, and contain a decent mixture of graphics and fun, adding up to the perfect pub package. Every game is faithfully reproduced and great fun can be had if you get a decent enough opponent. Some may frown on the idea of a two-player game only, but I don't think a one player game would have been much fun. I didn't find the multi-load a problem, as you can load each game individually — you just don't get your scores carried across from the last game. All in all, I found Pub Games great fun to play and well worth the asking price. "

COMMENTS

Control keys: different for each game
Joystick: keyboard only
Keyboard play: good
Use of colour: attractive
Graphics: straightforward
Sound: none
Skill levels: one
Screens: seven
General rating: A very well thought out set of simulations

Use of computer	76%
Graphics	76%
Playability	75%
Getting started	76%
Addictive qualities	77%
Value for money	79%
Overall	**77%**

PREVIEW

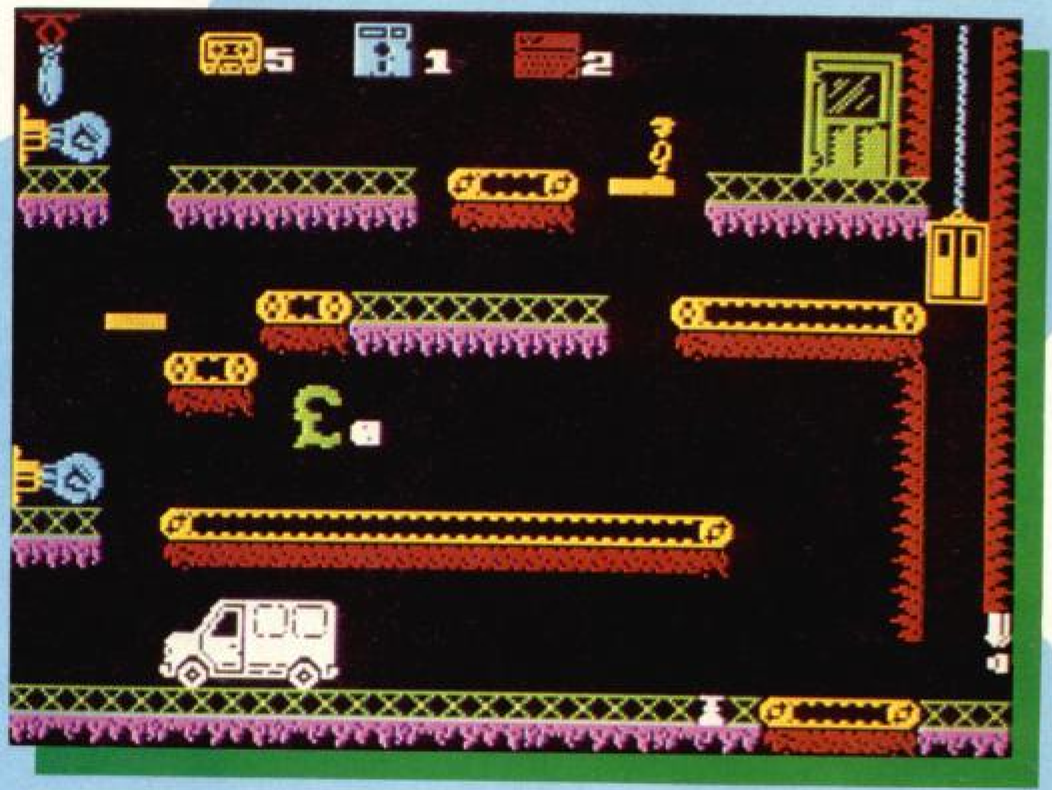
Coming soon to a Spectrum near you!

DIFFICULT DELIVERY

Here's a curious little number from A'N'F. *Wibstars* follows the antics of a computer distribution company, as it goes about its day-to-day business of collecting hardware and software, and delivering the goods to the various emporia along the High Street.

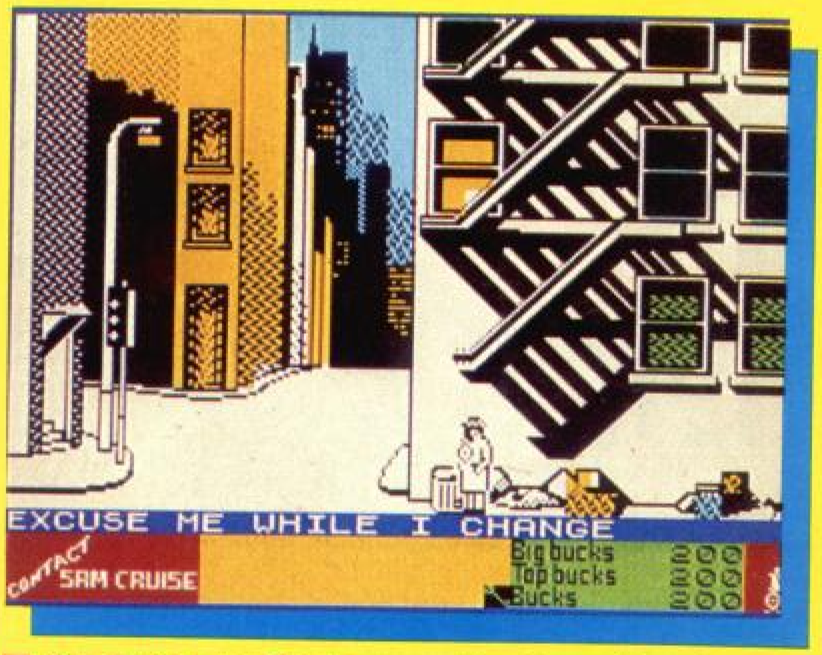
If you've ever wondered why your Spectrum occasionally throws a wobbly, then this game explains all. Driving your delivery van across town is hazardous in itself, with rival tradesmen scattering tin tacks over the asphalt — but that's nothing compared to the manic mayhem in the shops.

Wibstars will be out any day now — delivery men permitting! — and costs £9.95. Any resemblance with any real distribution companies, living or dead, is of course entirely coincidental.



A typical scene at your local computer store, as found in WIBSTARS, programmed by the A'N'F team

DOWN THESE MEAN STREETS



Sam, cruisin' around on the wrong side of town as he makes his way through MICROSPHERE's new offering



Sam shows us what's a broad . . .

Cue: soulful saxophone music. Pull camera back to reveal a beaten-up shamus sitting behind his beaten-up desk, bottle of Old Turkey in his beaten-up hand.

'Hi, my name's Sam Cruise. Occupation, private dick. Occupation at the moment, just showing the folks at CRASH around this fair city. When I first rented this office, it was on the wrong side of town, and it's been going down ever since — you get a wonderful view of the garbage tip from here.

'It's not a bad neighbourhood, though most folks have left. Either that or there's been some new concrete statues in the river. We get the odd tourists, mostly attending the hoodlum conventions at the Hotel Royale.'

MICROSPHERE's eagerly-awaited colourful film noir, *Contact Sam Cruise*, is now only days from completion, and programmer **David Reidy**'s still not giving much away. What we do know, from the delightful demo that arrived, is that it features an atmospheric in-period scrolling play area, much larger than that of *Skool Daze*, and includes many buildings, complete with brownstones and blinds. MICROSPHERE reckon that it's the first game which has solid locations that completely obscure your character as he explores them. Sam can open blinds, look out of windows, switch off lights, and make telephone calls. The game should be out by mid-November and the price has yet to be fixed. Reidy's also dropping heavy hints about a sequel to *Skool Daze*, also due out before Xmas. Keep a space on your Chrissie stocking list. . . .

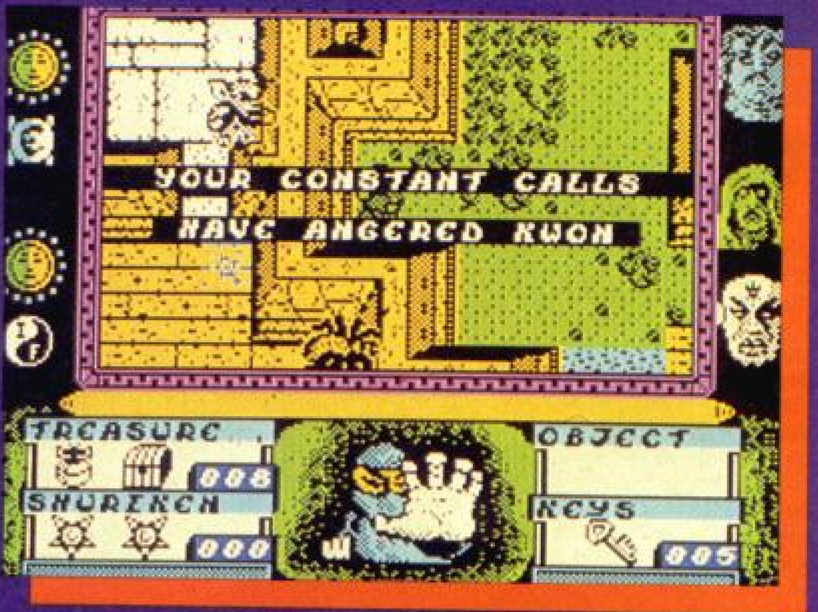
PREVIEW



Randy meets a denizen of the SS Rustbucket who looks slightly the worse for wear



Inside the Quenched Heart Keep, a medium-sized tarantula gets ready for a bit of unarmed but many-legged combat



Whoops! Kwon's getting bolshy. You're on your own now, kid

GREMLIN GRAPHICS SET TO SCORE!

A little extra programming effort has forced *Footballer of the Year* into extra time, so we thought we'd give you a longer look at two other GREMLIN games that are about to see the light of day.

Future Knight is a jolly little arcade quest featuring that knight in shining spacesuit, Randolph, in his chivalrous mission to rescue the winsome Amelia from the greasy grasp of Spegbott the Terrible. Amelia's vintage spacecraft — the *SS Rustbucket* — has crashlanded somewhere in the Zragg planetary system, and Randolph's search begins here.

There are 20 levels in the wrecked ship itself, and once Randolph has battled through these, summarily despatching ghosts, floating skulls, the odd robot or two, and the very unpleasant Berzerka Security Droids, there's the inhospitable planet surface to traverse. Here dwell mystical, awesome and undoubtedly unfriendly creatures, minor hindrances to one such as Randolph, though even he quails at the sight of the horrible Henchdroid, guarding the beloved Amelia in Spegbott's castle.

As you can see from the screen shots here, the graphics are detailed and chunky, with an effective cross-hatched shadow effect. Animation is smooth and humorous, brave Randolph shaking his head to clear it after particularly sudden falls, and obviously enjoying sliding down inclines.

Necessary spells and objects are scattered around the ship, ranging from keys, security passes and bombs, to the more esoteric sceptres, for killing the semi-indestructable robots. Gloves enable Randy to carry the release spell without getting burnt.

Avenger, or Way of the Tiger II, was previewed in September's CRASH. We've since seen an all-singing, all-dancing pre-production copy.

As you probably know by now, the story tells of how your foster father Naijishu has been killed by the malevolent Yaemon, Grandmaster of Flame, who has stolen the Scrolls of Kettsuin from the temple of the god Kwon. You have sworn to avenge Naijishu, and get back into Kwon's good books by retrieving the scrolls from Yaemon's fortress, the poetically named Quench Heart Keep.

The playing area is vast — 300 scrolling screens split over the six levels of the Keep — with trapdoors, grills, wells, and 'living floors'! There are more than enough nasties to practise your martial arts on, and the three guardians of the keep must be killed in a specific order. If all that wasn't enough, ol' Kwon occasionally throws a wobbly and refuses to help you, which is a bit ungrateful considering it's his rotten scrolls that you're trying to find.

Avenger and *Future Knight* should be hitting the streets on November 24, with price tags of £9.95 and £7.95 respectively.

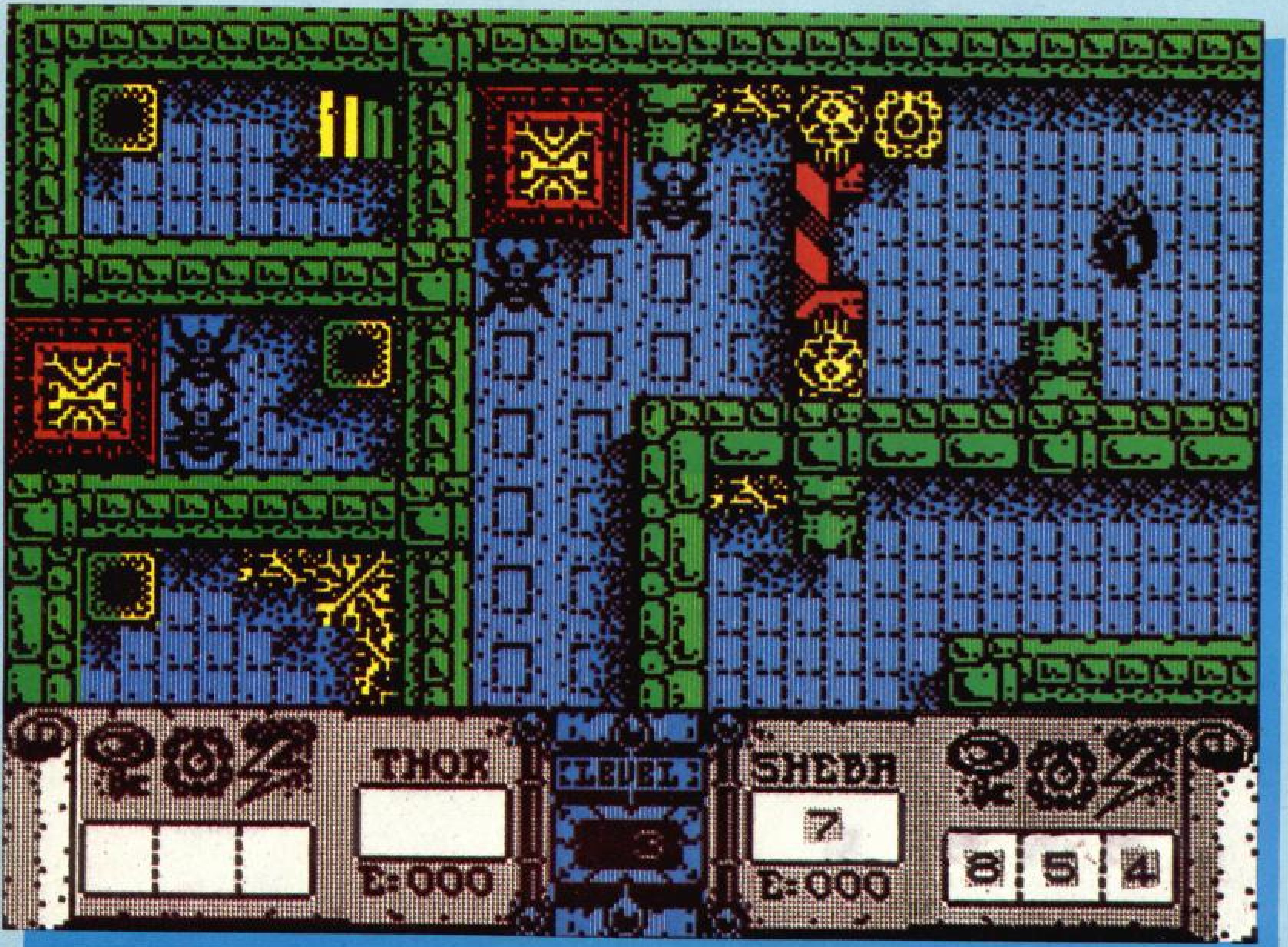
Enter stage left: A Berzerka Security Droid. Exit stage right, at speed, our fearless hero





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RAM JAM INVOLVED IN HIGH ELECTRICAL ACTIVITY!



Part of the multi-level playing area that features in the ELECTRIC DREAMS version of DANDY, a classic game that inspired a host of clones

DANDY SET TO SWAGGER OUT!

Many eons ago **John Palevich**, at that time a college student, wrote a game called *Dandy* on the Atari as part of his thesis. The game re-emerged in the arcades as the hugely popular *Gauntlet*. Now ELECTRIC DREAMS have taken the original concept of *Dandy* and working with Mr Palevich and RAM JAM have produced a game for the Spectrum which should be on its way to the shops any day now.

An extensive dungeons and dragon type game, the basic idea follows the scenario of the original *Dandy*. Controlling one of two characters, Thor or Sheba (depending on your sexual preference) you must penetrate as far as possible into a dungeon maze. Your character can be sustained during the game by picking up various tasty tidbits of food which conveniently litter the floor.

The rooms in this dungeon harbour valuable prizes. By hunting carefully, Thor and Sheba can collect various bits of treasure which could make them rich and famous. Or so they hope. The treasure can be stuffed into their spacious swag bags. However, this treasure isn't just there for the taking. That would just be too easy . . . The dungeons are possessively guarded by all manner of horrible nasties ranging from large and dangerous spiders, to wicked wizards and demons. These dangerous characters guard their treasure for all their worth, defending themselves by firing laser bolts which, if they reach their target, can prematurely curtail your aspirations to being grossly rich.

Each level consists of twenty screens which flick from one location to another. Thor and Sheba have to battle their way through each of these levels collecting as much treasure as possible and hacking up the opposition at the same time. Once each level has been completed, escape down the staircase to the next level is the order of the day.

The action is viewed from above. A two player option allows you and a friend can take on the characters of Thor and Sheba. Alternatively, if you're feeling particularly brave and fearless you can go solo and take on the terrors of the dungeons on your own.

At the end of the game you have two scores — one shows how much energy you have left and another indicates how much of the valuable treasure has been picked up. And they're only asking £7.95 for all this fun. . . .

TIME FOR SOME EXPLORATION

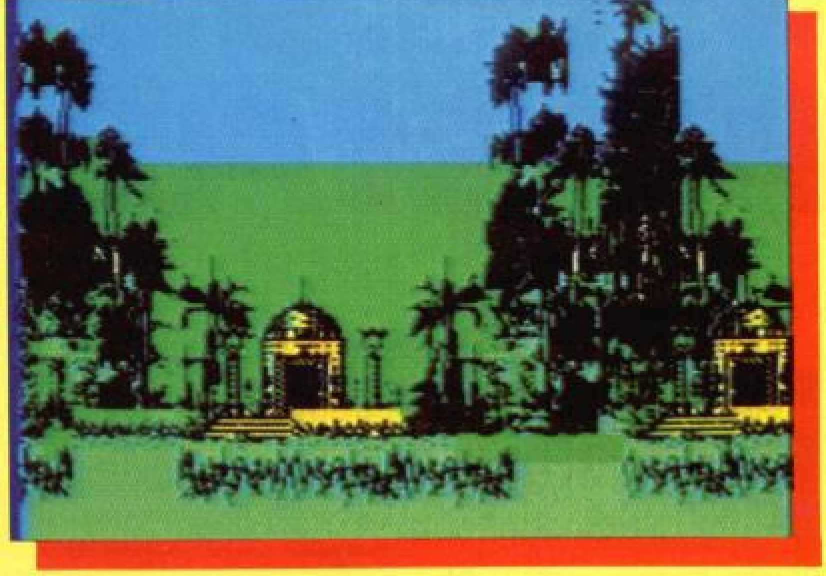
There you are, peacefully enjoying your Cryogenic sleep as you zoom towards your destination on a far and distant planet when you're awakened with a jolt. Something has gone horribly wrong. Your ship has gone way off course and has dropped right through a time warp onto a previously uncharted and unexplored planet. With all main systems on the ship failing you are forced to glide the stricken craft in for a crash landing. Vital components of your ship are stripped away during re-entry, and strewn across the planet's surface.

So. One moment it was comfy kip time and now you're stuck on a planet which you know nothing about, miles from your destination and with an unflyable ship. There's only one thing to do. Luckily, you have been equipped with a jet pack and can tour around the planet trying to locate and collect the missing pieces of the ship. When all the pieces have been found it might be possible to leave the planet and get back on course. There's one slight problem however. This planet is huge. With a theoretically infinite number of locations to visit, you're going to have a vast job on your hands trying to find those missing components.

The planet surface covered in vast jungles. Flying over the planet's surface the first task is to look for a clearing to set down in. Once on the ground the search may be continued on foot. The graphics show highly detailed jungle vegetation and the action scrolls in an interesting way — when you're walking in a certain direction you can zoom in to where you want to go and your surroundings get larger accordingly.

This planet isn't uninhabited: the natives are a nasty bunch and must be shot on sight as they tend to foul up the proceedings. A few beacon markers are available to help you navigate your way around and they can be dropped in the ground at strategic points along the way and then homed in on later using a bleeper which gets louder the nearer you are to the beacon.

Another **RAM JAM**game, this one should be available any day now, for £7.99



Rather like the Editor's back garden, this planet. Romping round an almost infinitely huge planet in search of bits of spacecraft, this is the kind of scenery you'll have to cope with in EXPLORER

THERE'S A MUTANT CYBERNETIC THIEF ABOUT

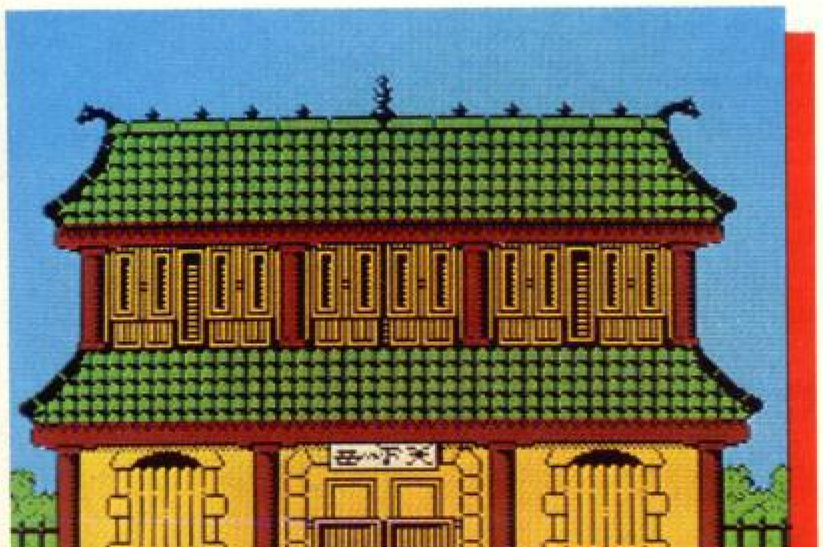
Yet another software house prepares to do battle in the ever-growing and increasingly vicious arena of budget software. Newly-formed **CODE MASTERS** are just putting the finishing touches to *Phantomas*, one of the four £1.99 cheapies they're releasing for the Spectrum in the next few weeks. Phantomas is a mutant cybernetic anti-hero who has escaped from the scientific base of Gurnar, in the Andromeda galaxy, and taken to a life of intergalactic crime.

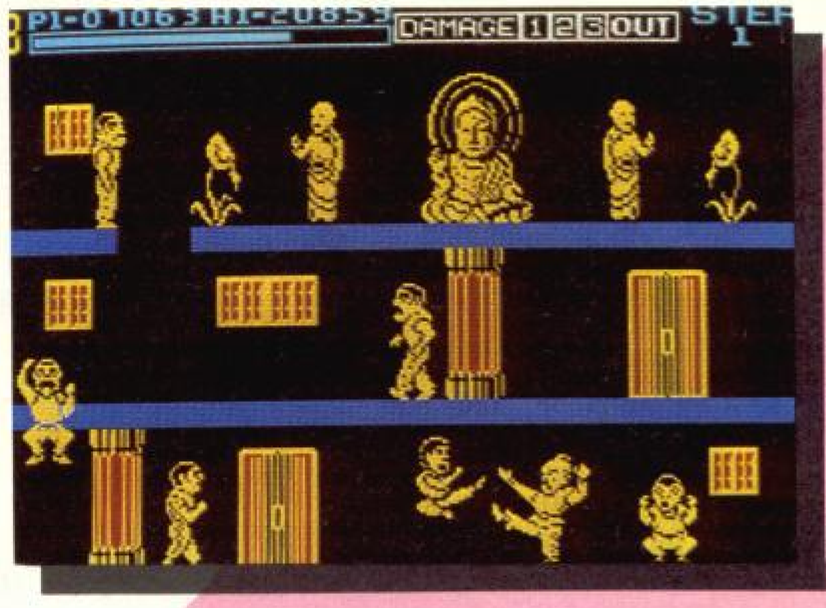
Phantomas has learnt of the existence of an incredible fortune amassed by the millionaire miser Goldter in his fortified retreat on the clone-planet Earth-Gamma. The mansion is guarded by a base packed with air and spacecraft collected from different time zones, and once inside the building there are numerous traps and nasties between Phantomas and the miser's gold.

Breaking into the strongbox involves throwing 36 levers secreted somewhere in the mansion, but Phantomas is also lured by the jewels hidden in the crypts where Goldter imprisons his associates. Some nifty riddle-solving is needed to get in and out of the armour-plated chamber.

And just when Phantomas thinks he's got away with the mega spondulicks, **CODE MASTERS** have got a surprise sting in the tail. Look out for *Phantomas* in the shops now, and in detail in the December CRASH.

Phantomas outside the millionaire's mansion in the latest game from the latest budget software house





Two early screen shots from THE EDGE's conversion of SHAO-LIN'S ROAD—another Konami Beat em up!



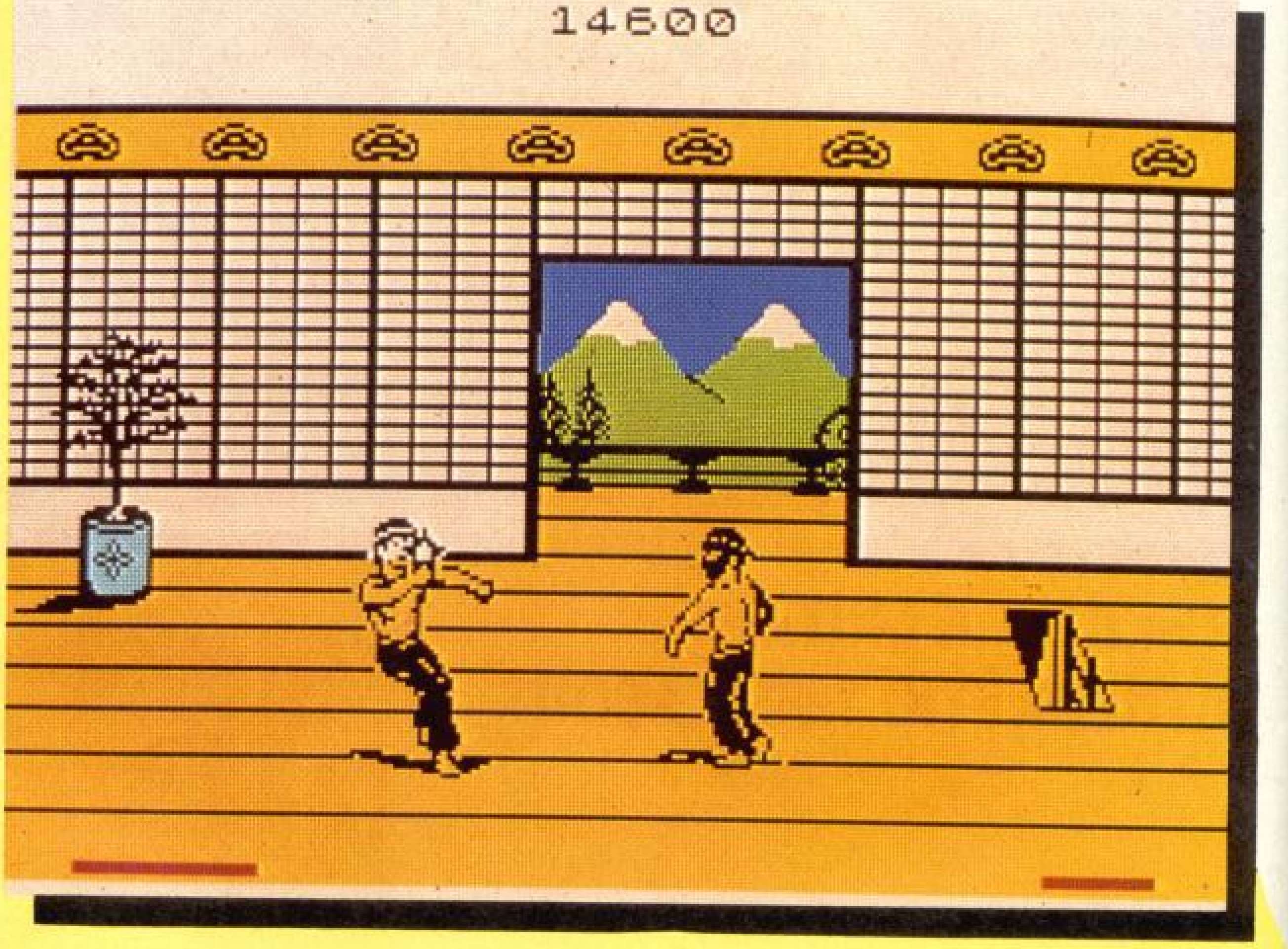
A FISTFUL OF GAMES

MELBOURNE HOUSE is gearing up for a mammoth onslaught on the games charts with an army of streetfighters, tough cops, well-known cartoon characters from films and TV with a bit of marble mayhem thrown in for good measure.

Due in any day now is *Dodgy Geezers*. First previewed in the September CRASH, this is the latest tongue-in-cheek adventure from the dubious partnership of **Lever** and **Jones**, who were to blame for such earlier assaults on commonsense and decency as *Hampstead* and *Terrormolinos*. Set in the docklands of east London, it follows the attempts of a pair of ex-cons to recruit a team of trustworthy crooks and pull off The Big Job before they get their wrists slapped by the Italian mob.

Fist II: The Legend Continues is also soon to be knocking at the door of CRASH Towers. Three months late, it takes you, as novice Fist warrior, out into the jungle-bound villages and underground mazes which surround the volcano stronghold of an evil Warlord. It's not all exploding fists, however. Your quest involves frequent stopovers at shrines and temples for a spot of meditation, which does wonders for your health and improves your fighting skills no end. *Fist II* will set you back £8.95.

The exploits of the misunderstood superhero Redhawk and his alter ego Kevin continue in *KWAH*, the sequel to the scrolling comic strip adventure which **MELBOURNE** released earlier this year.



Our novice Fist Warrior frozen at an awkward moment. If he moves, we'll review it . . .

KWAH takes off where *Redhawk* ended, with Kevin still attempting to solve the mystery of his lost memory and Redhawk's origins. He returns to the Lee Rest and Rehabilitation Centre to interrogate the sinister Dr Lee and bring him to justice. **MELBOURNE HOUSE** say that gameplay has been enhanced, with sound effects, detailed backgrounds, and recognition of standard adventure commands.

Are you feeling lucky, punks? Lucky enough to take on the padded shoulders and laser pistol of the meanest lawman of them all? *Judge Dredd* has his work cut out ridding the city of murderers, burglars, litter-bugs, dealers in old comics and alien seeds, and those stinking tobacco smokers. It's up to you to guide him to the perps, avoiding mutant commie robots, garbage grinders, sewer dwellers and innocent bystanders. Then you must decide whether the perp should be reprimanded or simply terminated. All good, clean, vicious cartoon fun in **MELBOURNE**'S game based around the cult hero of *2000AD*. Watch out for it before Christmas.



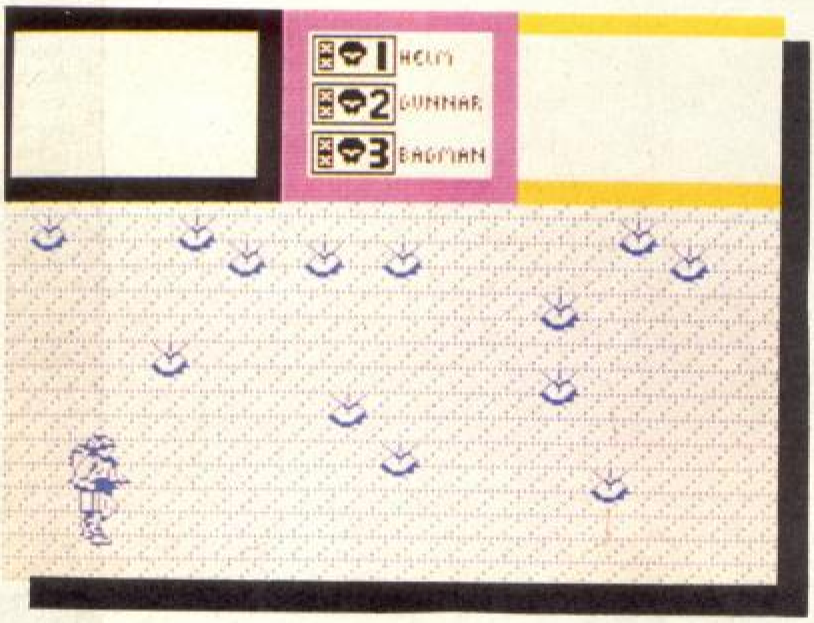
The return of Redsparrow. Er . . . Greenfinch. Hang on . . . Bluetit. Umm . . . Redhawk. That's it. KWAH!, the sequel from MELBOURNE HOUSE

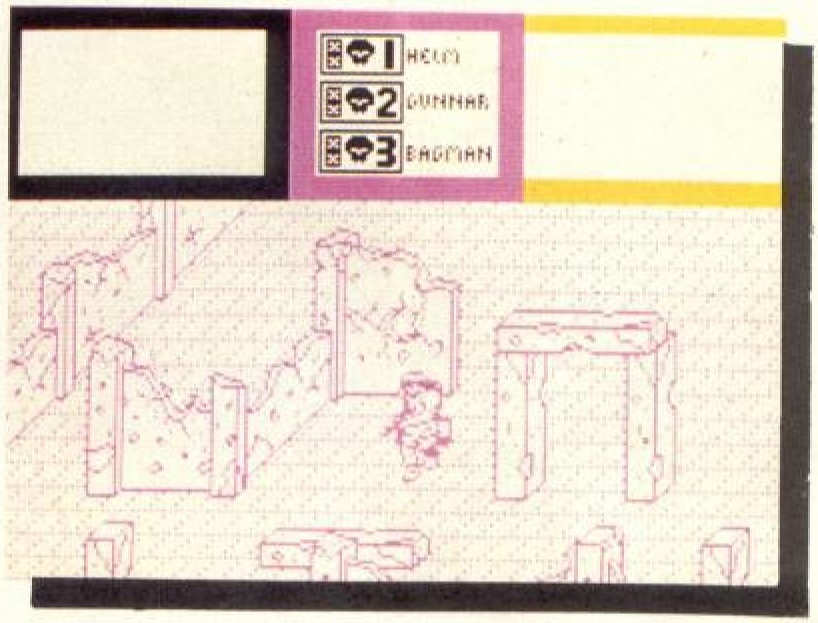
The official version of *Marble Madness* will be rolling your way soon, in *Marble Madness - The Construction Set*, which includes practice courses and DIY mode. Now you'll be able to design your own arenas, stuffed with all the authentic and diabolic *MM* nasties — green worms, acid slime, catapults and vacuum cleaners. Due out end of October, it'll cost £8.95.

Do It Yourself Marble Madness. Beware of imitations . . .



ROGUE PIRANHA!





Rogue amongst the ruins. The Battle Computer display and speech bubbles have yet to be added, but you can see the Bio-Chip icons, centre top

While Judge Dredd is cleaning up the streets of Mega-City One, his fellow *2000AD* stalwart, Rogue Trooper, is setting out on quest for vengeance in a new game release from PIRANHA.

Written by Wookie, a member of the DESIGN DESIGN team, *Rogue Trooper* takes place in the post-holocaust shambles of Nu Earth, familiar to all devotees of the comic strip. Rogue is the last of the Genetic Infantrymen, programmed soldiers fighting against the Norts. He finds himself alone amongst his dead comrades, with only seconds to transfer the chips from their bodies to his own equipment. Thus aided by Gunnar, Helm and Bagman, Rogue begins his search across the derelict cities and war zones of Nu Earth, seeking the traitor who betrayed the Southerners' cause.

The main screen area depicts Rogue and his immediate surroundings in 3D perspective, while above is the Battle Computer display, and the icons of the three Bio-Chips — Gunnar, Helm and Bagman. Messages generated by these three, slightly eccentric chip comrades appear in speech bubbles to the right of the icons.

In exploring the Glass Zones, the Scum Sea, the Ozart Mountains and the other wasted areas of this desolate world, Rogue Trooper must occasionally commandeer jeeps, tanks and spacecraft. Enemies are everywhere: bowler-hatted scavengers, hallucinogenic dream weavers, and the Nort troops themselves.



Rogue Trooper should be up and fighting by the end of October, priced £9.95. Look out for a full review in next month's issue.



ANTIRIAD APPROACHES



Tal in search of the anti-rad suit. Armourless fun from PALACE

From the people who brought you *Cauldron* and *Cauldron II* comes *Return of the Cauldron* — oops, sorry — comes *The Sacred Armour of Antiriad*. PALACE SOFTWARE has for some months now been working on an animated arcade adventure centred around the search by a barbarian race for the legendary sacred armour which has been lost amidst the horrors of the Evil Forest. The armour is in fact an anti-radiation combat suit developed in the 21st century by the superpowers in readiness for an all-out nuclear war. Tal, the lead character in the game, was chosen by the ruling elders to go on the quest — they believe the mythical armour will save them from the marauding aliens which have invaded this primitive post-holocaust world.

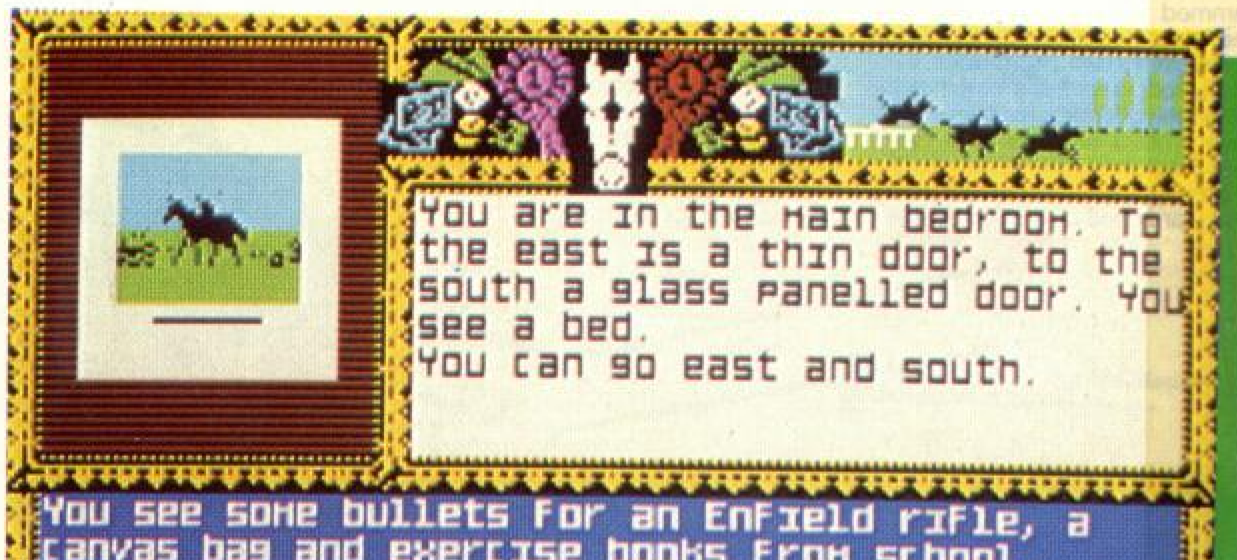
We first gave you a sneak preview of *Antiriad* in September. Since then we've seen a working version which moved very nicely but still needed some tweaking and debugging — it wasn't quite ready for review. The finished game, together with the accompanying mini-comic which sets out the scenario is due out on October 23, priced £8.99. Meanwhile, here are some screens and a page form the comic created by **Dan Malone**, the artist behind the whole project, to whet your appetite.

ONCE BITTEN...

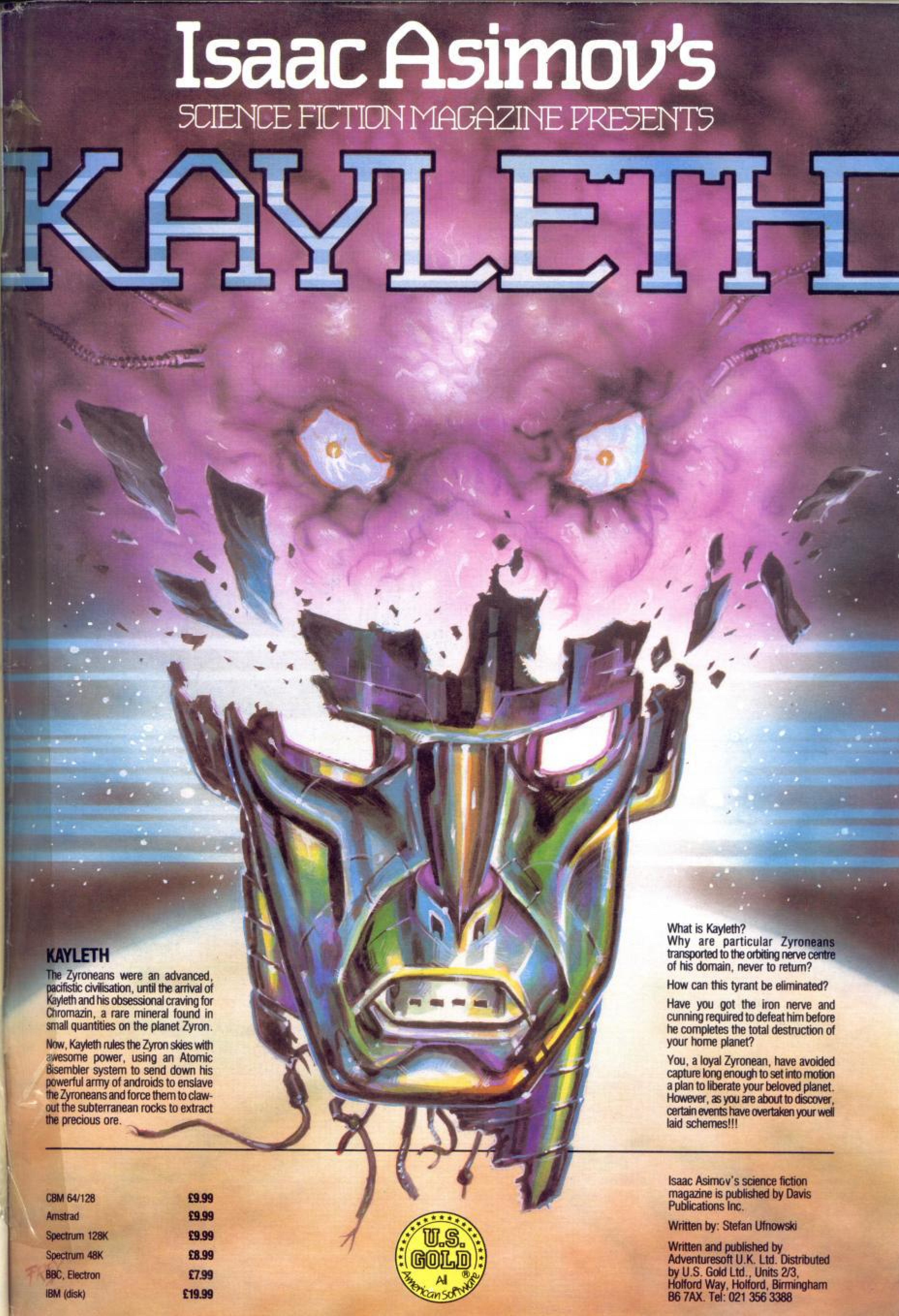
The bestselling thrillers by **Dick Francis** are excellent material for computer adaptations, and MOSAIC is first past the post with *Twice Shy*, a text adventure with graphic locations programmed by the RAM JAM team which wrote the still popular *Valkyrie 17*.

You take the part of Jonathan Derry, down-at-heel physics teacher, who accidentally acquires some computer data tapes. In attempting to return the cassettes to their rightful owner, you run foul of a racetrack mafia who aren't about to let a weedy school master stand in the way of their nefarious plans.

Twice Shy is unusual in that it comes with a racing simulation on side two which can be played as a game in its own right, as well as being an integral part of the text adventure, enabling Jonathan to accumulate some sorely needed greenbacks. It'll be interesting to see what Derek Brewster makes of *that*!

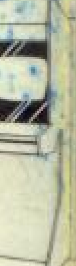


TWICE SHY. Traditional adventure and racing simulation combined courtesy of MOSAIC


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KAYLETH
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